



JSFD

Journal of Sport for Development

Message of support from Mr. Wilfried Lemke
Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General
on Sport for Development and Peace



Journal of Sport for Development

The United Nations considers sport as a powerful tool to promote education, health, development and peace. Sport unites people of all social classes, cultures and religions in a positive and educational way.

As the Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, it is with great pleasure that, I would like to take this opportunity to provide my heartfelt support for the Journal of Sport for Development (JSFD). With the continued growth of the sport-for-development sector – and the increased expectation to show project impact – it is timely to establish an academic journal that is specifically dedicated to evidence-based research in and around sport-for-development.

The commitment of the editors and academic board to publish JSFD as a peer-reviewed, open-access journal is important in many ways. First, a stringent review process guarantees academic rigour and high quality publications; second, the journal content and resources are tailored towards academics and practitioners from around the world; and finally, the decision to provide the opportunity to publish articles at no cost provides important opportunities and access for everyone irrespective of socio-economic status or background. In this sense, JSFD reflects many of the values that the ‘Sport for Development and Peace’ movement holds dear.

I strongly encourage both academic researchers and practitioners to submit their articles and case studies to JSFD. The multi-disciplinary focus, practical relevance and inclusive nature of JSFD are key strengths of this ambitious and aspiring journal, and I am convinced that it will be a great success for our sport-for-development community and beyond.

Geneva, 3 February 2014



Wilfried Lemke
Under-Secretary-General
Special Adviser to the Secretary-General
on Sport for Development and Peace



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Original Research

Plus-sport: The impact of a cross-cultural soccer coaching exchange

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Abstract

Developing and Improving Synergies in Chinese and United States Soccer (DISCUSS), was a two-way coaching exchange program that took place in 2010-2011. The goal of the program was to increase cultural understanding between the representatives of each country, in addition to exchanging soccer coaching information. The purpose of this study was to comprehensively evaluate the DISCUSS program. Specifically, the investigation centered on the participant's cultural awareness and understanding of the U.S. through sport for development and peace (SDP) programming. The following themes emerged from the data with respect to the cultural awareness and understanding of the coaching exchange participants: (1) a changed impression of Americans and American society, (2) a changed view of American's interest in soccer, and finally, (3) a perspective that sport and coaching were reflective of culture. Overall, the findings provide further support for SDP and sport diplomacy as worthwhile endeavors in promoting cultural understanding.

Introduction

Cultural awareness is "a process of becoming appreciative of and sensitive to the values, beliefs, lifestyles, practices and problem-solving of cultures." (1, p371) For many, it is a lifelong process in which every experience moves us closer to or further away from being culturally aware. In a world where interacting with people from other cultures and diverse backgrounds is ever increasing, those who are most culturally aware seem to have the greatest likelihood of success. (2-4) As individuals and organizations have come to this realization, many are seeking focused and directed opportunities to gain exposure to other cultures in an effort

to become more culturally aware. As a result, study abroad experiences and international exchanges are becoming more common and widely available.

However, not all international experiences result in increased cultural awareness. Whether because of a language barrier, culture shock, or other issues acclimating to a new culture, certain platforms seem to be more successful than others at bridging the cultural divide. Sport seems to be one of the 'universal languages' that allows people of different cultures to come together and learn about one another. Major League Baseball Hall-of-Famer Cal Ripken Jr., one of the U.S. Department of State's sports ambassadors, stated, "sport in general has the ability to communicate to all people similar to what music does...it kind of goes across all lines and can resonate with people to have fun and open up dialogues." (5, p14)

In 2006, the U.S. Department of State commenced its Sport Envoy Program, which has since seen much success. Through its Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) Sports United program, grant funding is provided annually to projects that seek to promote cultural understanding between the United States and other selected countries through sport. (6) One such project, Developing and Improving Synergies in Chinese and United States Soccer (DISCUSS), was a two-way coaching exchange program. In the summer of 2010, 12 Chinese soccer coaches and administrators came to Richmond, Virginia, for a two-week intensive training program that focused on coaching education and management of sport. In the summer of 2011, six coaches and administrators from the United States went to Shanghai, China, to institute a similar program to 50 coaches. The goal of the program was to increase cultural understanding between the representatives of each country,

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in addition to exchanging soccer coaching information.

The current study focuses on assessing the outcomes of the DISCUSS program, with specific focus on the Chinese participants. Before delving into the specifics of this study, it is important to understand what previous researchers have found in regard to the outcomes of international exchanges. The DISCUSS program was a unique blend of several components connecting it to three distinct areas of research. International exchanges were examined in regard to study abroad opportunities within higher education, government directed sport diplomacy, and sport for development (SFD) initiatives.

Review of literature

Study abroad

Within education spheres, many have embraced the idea of improving cultural understanding and competence by utilizing study abroad opportunities. "Educational institutions are strongly encouraged to provide opportunities for students to participate in exchange programs to broaden their perspective." (7, p877) In the 2009-10 academic year, over 270,000 U.S. students studied abroad, with over half of those taking part in short-term (eight weeks or less) programs. (8) Faculty and students alike recognize the importance of study abroad experiences in increasing cultural competency and related capacities. (9-10)

Features of study abroad in higher education include spending time in another culture in order to develop or improve foreign language skills, gaining academic credentials, increasing knowledge of another country, and improving global understanding. (11) Studies have found that students who study abroad have greater intercultural communication skills, (12) stronger intercultural proficiency, and are more open to cultural diversity than those who complete their full degree on-campus. (13)

For the most part, the results of research on study abroad opportunities are positive. However, each field of study is different, as is the study abroad experience associated with each. The research conducted in the area of sport-related study abroad opportunities is essentially non-existent, even though there are many programs offering these experiences. Regardless, the current study is similar to research on other study abroad programs in that it assesses a short-term, in-country residency program that sought to increase knowledge in a particular subject while learning about another culture. At the same time, the results of the DISCUSS program can be aligned with research conducted

in the fields of sport diplomacy and SFD as outlined in the following sections.

Sport diplomacy

The idea behind sporting diplomacy in the U.S began in April 1971 when the American Table Tennis team was invited to China to play a series of matches. 'Ping Pong Diplomacy,' as it became known, was the first time that a group of American's had been invited to China since the Communist takeover in 1949. The Chinese Premier at the time, Chou En-lai, said, "never before in history has sport been used so effectively as a tool of international diplomacy." (14, p4) The trip opened the doors for President Nixon to travel to China the next year, which was the first time a U.S. President had visited the former Communist country. (5)

In 2006, under President George W. Bush, the U. S. Department of State extended the idea of sport diplomacy by creating the U.S.'s first public diplomacy envoy program and naming figure skater Michelle Kwan and baseball legend Cal Ripken Jr. as its representatives. (5) This program is now carried out by the ECA within the U.S. Department of State. The ECA's stated mission is to "increase mutual understanding of the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange," (6) by using sport as a major vehicle.

One of the reasons why sport works in these situations is because it is considered 'neutral' ground. While academia, politics, art and science are used as other exchange platforms, sport is considered a lower-risk testing ground for improving cultural relations, and generally receives more media coverage, giving it a broader audience (15). While historically sport diplomacy has been seen as an avenue for political advancement, this has been changing as countries become more globalised and accepting of differences, and sport diplomacy efforts have been able to transition into more universal goals and outcomes. "If the playing field can provide a stage for political grievance and conflict, certainly it can also facilitate cooperation and understanding. Sports are now free from the tensions and limitations of the Cold War, allowing them to play a new, positive role in international politics" (15, p65).

Sport for development

Based on this philosophy, SFD has developed into its own field and continues to gain momentum by using sport as a

tool to achieve personal and social development and peace objectives (16-17). SFD efforts include, but are not limited to: public health issues, socialization of youth, social inclusion of the disadvantaged, economic development, and fostering intercultural exchange (18).

The field of SFD has blossomed as organizations throughout the world have found increasing value in sport, partly as a result of “the recognition that the orthodox policies of ‘development’ have failed to deliver their objectives” (19, p1). There is a belief among some academics and practitioners that sport can be a successful change agent that supports traditional development efforts. However, debate exists as to the effectiveness of individual programs because there is still limited research and evidence in this area (17, 20-21).

Program evaluation from several SFD initiatives has seen some modest positive results. Projects such as the Street Socceros (Australia), Football for Peace (UK), and the Asian German Sports Exchange Program (Sri Lanka) have had a positive impact on their participants. However, the researchers of these programs caution against the idea that sport is the ‘magic bullet’. In assessing the Street Socceros program, Sherry (22) notes, “Although sport participation alone cannot account for these beneficial outcomes, this study demonstrates the role that sport programs can play in the re-engagement of marginalized people within the broader community.” (p59) Sudgen, (23) who worked closely with the Football for Peace program, cautions that in order for these programs to see success, they must be “locally grounded, thought out, and professionally managed.” Even then they make only “a modest contribution to wider efforts to promote conflict resolution and peaceful co-existence.” (p221) Schulenkorf, (24) who worked with the Asian German Sports Exchange Program, calls sport a ‘starting point’ that must be integrated into larger social agendas in order to see success. (p273)

Clearly, these authors see the value in sport as a social change agent, but stress the need for the programming to be well directed and focused in order for the change to be felt. There is also a need for continued program evaluation in the field of SFD to determine what is most effective in this type of programming.

Purpose for the study

Guided by Intergroup Contact Theory, (25) the purpose of this study was to objectively explore the impact of the DISCUSS program on the 12 Chinese coaches and administrators that participated in Phase 1 of the program. Specifically, the study investigated how the Chinese

participants’ experiences in the U.S. and interactions with Americans impacted their impression of the U.S. and of Americans. Furthermore, the study examined the influence of soccer and programming related to coaching soccer as a catalyst for cultural awareness and understanding. An ancillary goal of the study was to bridge the gap between the areas of study abroad, sport diplomacy and SFD, and contribute to the body of knowledge associated with each. In addition, this investigation aimed to provide objective evidence and justification for the continuation of future SFD efforts as prescribed by researchers Brunelli and Parisi (17) and Levermore and Beacom. (19) The following research questions were developed to help guide the analysis:

1. How did the Chinese participants’ impressions of the U.S./Americans change as a result of the short term exchange program?
2. In what ways did the role of soccer and programming related to soccer coaching influence the cultural awareness and understanding of participants?

Theoretical framework

To ensure that this study had a sound theoretical base, the authors utilized Intergroup Contact Theory as a starting point. Originally proposed in Allport’s *Nature of Prejudice*, (25) at its simplest, it is the idea that interaction between people of different groups should increase the relationships and understanding between them. Allport (25) theorized that in order for optimal results to stem from the intergroup contact, four conditions must exist: equal status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support from authorities. Researchers across numerous fields of study have utilized Allport’s theory when bringing together people of different groups, addressing differences in race, culture, religion, age, sexual orientation, and health, among others. Though his theory continues to be extensively cited today, many have revisited the list of conditions noting that there are many others that could apply, given individual situations. Most notably, Pettigrew has reconsidered the theory and its applicability through the changing decades. (26-28) After extensive research on Intergroup Contact Theory and its applicability, Pettigrew concluded that a fifth condition should be added for optimal results, “the contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends.” (28, p76) The analysis of the DISCUSS program has utilized Intergroup Contact Theory, including Pettigrew’s fifth ‘friendship’ element.

Methods

Sample, methodological approach, and data

The DISCUSS program had many participants, including coaches, administrators, educators, youth players, volunteers and home stay families. This study, however, focused solely on the Chinese participants (n=12) that travelled to the U.S. in July 2010, who also participated in the second phase of the program, which took place in Shanghai, China in July 2011. The group consisted of two full-time youth soccer administrators, eight youth soccer coaches, and two who were classified as both a coach and administrator. Six of the participants were female and six were male. The average age was 44 and ranged from 33 to 58. Each participant was married, and only two had a good command of the English language (self-reported). Coaching experience among the participants ranged from three to over 30 years, and playing experience ranged from elite professional (including national teams) to no competitive playing experience. See Table 1 for a complete listing of the participants. Pseudonyms were used to prevent participant identification.

Table 1 – Phase 1 Coaches and Administrators

Participant (Pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Position
Chung	M	55	Administrator
Mingmei	F	37	Administrator/Coach
Wen	M	44	Administrator/Coach
Quon	M	33	Administrator
Yu	M	45	Coach
Jun	F	41	Coach
Shen	M	58	Coach
Tao	F	43	Coach
Lien	F	41	Coach
Li	M	53	Coach
Hua	F	44	Coach
Heng	F	39	Coach

Responding to a growing concern in SFD evaluation that participants are often excluded from the analysis, the researchers employed a type of participatory methodology in analyzing the data. A participatory methodology is believed to provide better depth and holistic understanding. (29) The primary source of data collection came from in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson (30) stated, "Interviews aim to elicit participants' views of their lives as portrayed in their stories, and so to gain access to their experiences, feelings and social worlds." (p727) An interview protocol was used

to provide structure to the interviews. Each interview loosely followed a six to ten question interview guide and ranged from 15 to 30 minutes in duration.

To properly measure the subjective reality of the participants in a way that is meaningful for the participants themselves, the theory of interpretivism was used as a guide in developing interview questions, leading discussions, and observing interactions. (31-32) Each participant has a unique experience with distinct attitudes, emotions, and preconceived notions. It was the researchers' goal to extract the distinctiveness of each individual's reality and relate it to the existing theoretical framework and additional concepts present in the literature. Similar approaches have centered on cultural perceptions of information and communication technology, (33) decision making of tourists (34) and student perceptions of alienation. (35) Ultimately, utilizing interpretivism to examine the cultural perceptions of the coaching participants will provide the most objective method to understanding subjective qualities of an individual. (36)

The interview questions were asked in English and translated simultaneously by an interpreter into Chinese. The participants' responses were then translated back into English. Each participant was interviewed once and the same interpreter was present for each interview. Two of the participants did not use an interpreter, as they were proficient in English. The interviews took place on the second to last day of Phase 1's two-week exchange. In addition to interviews, data came from discussions and direct observation of the Phase 1 participants. Furthermore, two paper surveys were conducted: one administered six weeks before programming began; and the other, six months after programming concluded. The same company translated both surveys before and after administration.

The survey instruments included a combination of scaled and open-ended questions. The pre-program survey included eight items, three of which were semantic differential scaled questions. The post-program survey contained 11 items, including the same-scaled questions and additional questions about programming and outcomes. Both surveys are available in the Appendix. The surveys served several purposes in addition to evaluation. The data that was gathered also assisted in program planning, provided a needs-assessment, drove curriculum, and assured proper staffing. As with any program experience, direct observations and informal discussions between participants and administrators were important aspects of the research process. These data were collected from all administrators

involved in the study by the primary investigator via formal narratives at the end of the program and through informal group interviews.

Data analysis and trustworthiness

The semi-structured interview recordings were first transcribed verbatim. It is important to note that the presence of an interpreter in the interview session eliminated the need for interview translation post-interview. In addition, it allowed the interviewers to ask for clarification when the interpretation was not clear. Three independent researchers coded and analyzed the transcripts. As prescribed by Glesne, (37) the data coding procedure utilized analytic codes, categorization, and theme searching. First, the transcribed responses were systematically read and grouped. Recurring words, phrases, and ways of thinking within each group were then identified and labeled as coding categories. Related codes were then synthesized into broader codes. For organizational purposes, hand-written and computer-assisted methods (Microsoft Word) were employed during coding. Lastly, themes were constructed from the relationships amongst codes that were analyzed.

By adopting participatory methodology, the researchers utilized method and researcher triangulation by questioning the same group of subjects in multiple ways, utilizing various methods of data collection, and enlisting a multi-member research team in the process. (38, 30) Additionally, credibility and dependability was addressed through member checking and audio-recording the interviews. Extensive notes were also kept describing the data collection process, categorization, and how decisions were made. To enhance the transferability of the study, rich and thick descriptions were provided so that “the readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation.” (39, p211)

The participatory methodology helped to address another concern of this examination: the potential for cultural bias among the study’s participants in responding to interview questions. Often termed as administration bias by qualitative methodologists, (40) this threat to trustworthiness includes the violation of proper communication modes and the disregard for cultural norms. With regard to the current sample of participants, the contemporary culture of interpersonal Chinese communication is well known for its politeness regardless of true feelings. (41) In addition, the sample was provided a rare opportunity for professional development and travel,

which could have made the participants reticent to be critical. Thus, receiving objective feedback from the participants that included cultural offenses and/or programmatic miscues was a known challenge for the researchers. The participatory methodology was one step to combat this issue. The research team also attempted a concerted effort to illicit objective feedback throughout the research process including interviews and observations.

Researcher’s stance

Of the three-member research team, two were administrators of the cross-cultural coaching program, and were therefore responsible for programming, logistics, and curriculum. According to Merriam, (39) it is imperative that the researcher attempt to remove, or at least become aware of, prejudices, viewpoints, or assumptions regarding the experience under investigation. Therefore, throughout this study the research team attempted to separately document personal experiences and feelings from the experiences being studied. For instance, neutrality during the interview process and data analysis was vital, yet the administrators/researchers obviously wanted the program to be impactful and successful. Thus, a distinct effort to remain objective was made during reporting and dissemination. Despite this goal, this bias could be a limitation of our findings and a weakness of how SFD programs are evaluated in general.

Results

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a short-term coaching exchange between the U.S. and China (DISCUSS). Specifically, the investigation centered on the participants’ cultural awareness and understanding of the U.S. through SFD programming. The following themes emerged from the data with respect to the cultural awareness and understanding of the coaching exchange participants: (1) a changed impression of Americans and American society, (2) a changed view of Americans’ interest in soccer, and finally, (3) a perspective that sport and coaching were reflective of culture.

Changed impression of Americans and American society

The first theme explored in this study centered on how the participants’ experiences with the cross-cultural exchange changed their impression of Americans and American society. According to many of the participants, previous impressions of the U.S. were formed negatively through the media. For instance, Wen acknowledged, “my previous impression of the U.S. all derived from the movie images.

That's [a] very standard image...after I've been here and after my personal contact I realized that American society is a very stable society, not fighting going on and all the violence going on." This sentiment was echoed by a number of participants. Li stated:

This is my first visit to the U.S. and prior, I have visited other countries, different places, and my impression, my knowledge of the U.S., was all from the media—newspapers, TV, movies. And now I personally come to this country and I know it is quite different from my impression before through the media.

When probed by the interviewer for an explanation, Li answered: *"This is a very peaceful, stable society, and people have lots of freedom...I find that Americans are very lawful people, they follow the law, you know, do things in an orderly way"*. One participant, Shen, suggested that the U.S.'s media representation was probably a poor barometer to judge all Americans. He said,

"The problem is we watch too much movies and news and celebrity and always they are married seven times but it's not so much...[Americans] are married. They are very responsible to their family and to their children."

For most of the participants, the two-week program was their first time in the U.S. and they were quick to complement the culture, as a whole. The following are examples of some participants' comments:

- *"My first trip to this beautiful country; I am very impressed: civil construction of a combination of tradition and futurism; conscientiousness to work and friendliness and warmth to guests."*

- *"A great country with great contribution to human progress; great, civilized, friendly, kind and wise people; education and investment in large amounts to teenagers and attention to education and future."*

- *"I know America better after this trip. It is an open, advanced, and democratic country. They, including the young, are confident about everything."*

- *"Before I came here my impression of Americans was very—Americans were very arrogant. But I come over here and I find all the American people they are very friendly. They are eager to help other people, they are very helpful. And they're warm; they are very committed focused, contentious."*

One of the sub-themes that emerged from the overwhelming positive comments was the perception of the U.S. as a free society. Several statements were made, formally and informally, about the limitless opportunities provided to Americans, especially the youth. In addition, the participants acknowledged the importance of free speech.

Another sub-theme included the notion that U.S. society was more law abiding than initially perceived. Once again, this may stem from the media-driven pre-trip impression of the U.S., but participants were impressed with the society's orderly infrastructure and the overall respect offered to each other. In regard to the participants' impression of the U.S. and Americans, the pre-post survey result differences changed from a mean of 7.842 (SD=1.231) on a 10 point semantic differential (1—Extremely Negative; 10—Extremely Positive) to 9.412 (SD=.795).

Another sub-theme that emerged from the data was the participants' changed perspective of the American lifestyle, in particular the lifestyle of the American family. In an effort to provide a comprehensive intercultural experience and to keep expenses down, the Phase 1 participants stayed with host families while in Richmond. The host families were solicited through a youth soccer program located in the Western suburbs of the Mid-Atlantic city. Of the five families who volunteered, each had a child or grandchild that played for the soccer club. Each had at least two Chinese coaches staying with them, with two families hosting three coaches each.

Despite pre-trip anxiousness and apprehensiveness, the participants were complimentary about their experience with their host families. It is the researchers' contention that the greatest transformation of cultural understanding took place in the host families' home. For instance, Wen stated:

When we got to Washington D.C. and Richmond and we found out we were going to stay with host family, we were very concerned because as you know the Chinese...never want to break or inconvenience anyone ever, so we were quite worried, but the arrangement with the host families were so hospitable...all of our worries and concerns all disappeared.

Quon added, *"I think it helps us to know more about the American society and also help the host family to know more about the Chinese society."* He went on to mention why staying with a host family was preferred to staying in a hotel: *"If I stay in a hotel, I cannot learn so much because*

when you stay in a hotel, it's just like a tourist group, like go outside and after dinner, go back home, watch TV and chat with colleagues."

Similarly, Chung acknowledged:

From this format of staying with host family, we get an overall comprehensive understanding of American society family people. Because we interact with the host family during breakfast time, dinner time, after dinner, we talk with them. We learn about how Americans life. And this something we never could have uptake if we stayed at hotel. Yu added, "When you asked me to stay at [the host family's] house, there was a strong impact on me. Why I say this? We are able to spend every moment in their living environment with them. That's had a strong impact."

The research team reinforced this finding through direct observation. Initially, body language and informal comments made indicated the level of apprehensiveness about staying with host families in a culture with which they were unfamiliar. As the days progressed, there was much more excitement about going home at night to see their host families and find out what they had planned for the evening's activities.

Two of the Chinese coaches cooked a traditional dinner for their host family one evening, and by the final closing ceremony, the Chinese participants were spending the majority of their time with their host families, rather than with each other. There was a complete shift from the beginning of the program to the end, and it was very clear to see that they were much more comfortable in the American society that they had come to know through their host families than what they anticipated going into the experience.

Due to language differences of most of the participants, communication issues occurred during the stay. However, the participants acknowledged that as the relationship grew, communication became easier and more frequent. In a few cases, the host families learned or practiced the Chinese language in advance to help communication.

In addition, several participants noted the host families' concerted effort and enthusiasm in trying to communicate.

The last sub-theme that emerged involved the level of parental support provided by American parents. Tao, for instance, was really impressed by the strong relationship between American parents and children. She stated, *"the*

way they educate, interact with their children...they are very open, and motivate them, and they pay attention to the children's interest." Mingmei, one of the participants who had been to the U.S. previously, acknowledged a similar sub-theme and a change in perspective:

I've been coming here since 1991, but I've only had a couple of previous opportunities to stay with host families so not too often. So to understand American family life is quite different than what I understand previously. Especially the parents they pay attention to their children's education and their life. I thought before that parents just want to make sure their children are happy leading a happy free life. But, now I know they really pay attention to their academic their school. They have a plan and they are conscientious about how their children develop and they want to help them reach that goal...Now I know [American parents] really pay attention to their academics and their children's overall development...physically, spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and socially...in all.

Changed view of American's interest in soccer

Another theme that emerged among the participants was a changed view of Americans' interests in soccer, which was communicated in various ways. It became clear that the Chinese participants' view of American soccer was based upon what they see of U.S. soccer on the world stage, namely, the men's and women's national teams. Noting that the U.S. men's national team is not highly competitive with other countries around the world, led most of the delegates to believe that there would not be a high level of participation or enthusiasm for soccer in the United States. One participant, Quon, provided perspective on why he (and others) were surprised by the level of enthusiasm for soccer in the United States:

I didn't expect to see how kids here love soccer because American soccer is not like European [soccer where] they are at the top of the world, especially men's soccer. But I see the children here show great enthusiasm in soccer when they practice. That amazed me. That really is shocking. I didn't expect that.

The recognition that Americans are quite passionate about soccer was seen among different groups. The Chinese delegates specifically commented on the level of involvement and support among the kids, coaches, and parents. One coach, Jun, made a comparison of the U.S. children to children in China, stating:

I was deeply touched by how committed the young kids under such hot sun, the heat, they gave their all, they run fast, they participated in that. I was so touched by seeing that, because in China, we couldn't get our children to do that, under that condition. I will definitely share this, what I learned, that I will tell my students that you will have to learn from American kids, this aspect.

Another coach, Yu, noted, *"I was struck deeply at how popular the sport was among the young people."* The participants continued to use words such as 'shocking,' 'surprised' and 'impressed' to express their feelings on how dedicated and excited people in the United States are about soccer.

The researchers also saw this theme emerge through direct observation. The Chinese participants were eager for opportunities to attend training sessions and see the hard work, enthusiasm, and dedication exhibited by the kids. Two different times some of the coaches asked if they could attend extra training sessions, one of which was a 'free play' night where the soccer fields are open to the kids, but no coaching takes place and no formal practices are held. The kids are free to come out and play at their own disposal. Four of the Chinese participants attended 'free play' and experienced great joy at seeing these kids come out to a voluntary evening of soccer in which there was no formal instruction. The coaches commented on how surprised they were by this and how unlikely it would be to get Chinese kids to attend a similar event. In regards to soccer coaches in the United States, it seemed that the level of dedication and the serious attitude toward coaching created the biggest impression among the Chinese delegation. Comments such as *"what shocks me the most in this training course is the professional dedication of Americans, especially the coach,"* and *"the U.S. is not powerful in football, but the coaches are much more dedicated in football training than the Chinese coaches I have seen,"* indicate not only the change in perception, but also the perspective from which the Chinese coaches come. In addition to the dedication of coaches, there was also recognition for the serious attitude in how each coach approached the training sessions and games.

As part of the change in the overall view of Americans' interest in soccer, the group also mentioned the involvement and dedication of soccer parents. It became clear to participants that in contrast to parents in China who want their children to focus exclusively on their education, parents in the U.S support their children in all of their interests. Mingmei communicated this by saying: *"If American students want to play football, their parents*

will accompany them. On the contrary, Chinese parents put study as a priority." Others echoed this feeling, noting the strong levels of 'enthusiasm' and 'support' that U.S parents show their children in relation to soccer. To summarize many similar views, Shen said, *"I'm impressed the players at the young age are so totally focused on the field and how much support and enthusiasm from the parents they gave to the players."*

Sport and coaching reflective of culture

As the overarching goal of the exchange was to gain increased cultural understanding, researchers were pleased to see that a major thematic finding was how sport and coaching is reflective of culture. Though sport is often used as a 'carrot' to bring people together and set the stage for deeper levels of learning to occur, in this situation, the learning was actually accomplished through the sport itself. As the U.S. and China are culturally and historically different in many ways, it was clear to see some of these differences played out on the soccer field. Therefore, sport and coaching became reflective of culture, and will be addressed in regard to three sub-themes: 1) the pressure of academics; 2) flexibility and guided discovery; and 3) communication differences.

Pressure of academics

Although both China and the U.S. claim to put a very strong emphasis on their education system, the results of this research clearly indicate that in China, nothing else can come before education in the life of a child. In the U.S., while education is extremely important, parents also see a need for children to have other interests and be involved in activities outside of school. Yu communicated this difference in the following way:

The government in the U.S., you create a lot of opportunities for the youth, young people to have the time, to have the opportunity to participate in these sports, these activities, is not like in China. The young students are under strong pressure to do well in the academic field. Even when the children in China have the free time, the parents would not usually encourage the children to participate in the organized extracurricular outdoor activities. Instead, they will arrange all kinds of academia and cultural related activities. The children are under great pressure.

Many of the coaches expressed their concern about putting so much academic pressure on the children in China, stating that they see value in what they observed in America, where

parents are supportive of their children's other interests as well. Shen expressed this best:

I know my players really envy the American players...the reason is they express such a natural, lively, happy [life]; but I told my players that the importance is not only focus on academic in China...parents in school only emphasize academic achievement, but I told them that it's important to have both. But now I came to the U.S. and I witnessed that is true.

Though the coaches had obviously put much thought into this issue of academic pressure, it seems as though their experience in the United States and throughout the exchange program reinforced their feelings of the need to find better balance in the lives of their youth.

They also seemed to gain a better understanding of how the U.S. utilizes sport as an educational tool, which is used to develop lifelong characteristics and traits that will transcend soccer, in addition to merely teaching the sport. Participants made comments such as, *"The coaches should try not to blindly require students to follow them, but to guide students with patience and let them find and solve the problems in learning. This will benefit them for life,"* (Shen) and:

Before I came here, as in China, our goal was single minded - we just focus on the competition and to win the game. But now from the courses, the field I learned, I realized there are a lot more important aspects in the sports. We can learn from the sport (Li).

Flexibility and guided discovery: One topic that was consistently mentioned by Chinese participants was the concept of 'guided discovery.' Guided discovery is a process of teaching and coaching by asking meaningful questions. Empowering coaches want their athletes to be capable of solving the problems that the game/competition presents. Therefore, the athletes must have the opportunity to practice problem solving (decision making). This must be accomplished in the training and game environment. Toward this end, coaches must be skilled in the art of asking meaningful questions. (42) U.S. soccer, using Kidman as a key resource, (42) has integrated guided discovery into all coaching licensing courses.

This concept was foreign to the Chinese coaches, but they seemed very interested in learning more. When asked what was most valuable to them from a training perspective, Lien stated, *"We were talking about the technical skills, the exploratory, discovery."* Tao communicated it in this

way, *"One thing is how you teach how you train the children how to think with their own brain."* This idea is in contrast to how Chinese children are taught on the soccer field. During the Chinese residency portion of the program, researchers observed the coaches working with their players, and it was a much more rigid training situation where the coaches told the players where to go on the field and where they should have been when a play went wrong, rather than helping the child figure out how he or she could have done something different.

Along with guided discovery, the Chinese delegates viewed the U.S. style of training as more flexible in general. *"The fundamental training program is very similar with what we do in China; however, the methods are quite different. You are much more flexible over here,"* noted Heng. Yu worded it in another way, *"This is probably different in America because in America the coaches like to give the young players more space for them to be more creative, imaginative, decision making...But that's a good point too. It's different."* This observed flexibility indicates a difference not only on the soccer field, but culturally as well. Americans have much more freedom and are encouraged to question decisions and contribute to solutions, rather than just accepting a response without an explanation. In contrast, in China, society is much more rigid, government regulated, and based on a history of respect. They show this respect to their coaches by accepting instruction without question, rather than engaging in guided discovery-based techniques. Through soccer, one was able to see cultural practices being depicted on the field.

Communication differences

Taking the idea of guided discovery and flexibility even further; the ways of communicating and type of relationships between the coaches and players was also reflective of American and Chinese culture. The Chinese participants observed that the U.S. coaches utilized a much more participatory style of communication with their players. They encouraged players to be involved and were very open to two-way communication.

Lein commented:

You use different kinds of options, different methods to achieve to help the players to use their creativity. You don't just use verbal instruction; you actually use different methods to teach the players. I personally, in the past, just use verbal instructions to tell them. But now I learn there is a different way of teaching that.

Mingmei communicated the same idea in the following way, *“I think what I learned here is the teaching methods, how you inspire the students. How we [Chinese coaches] teach is that they don’t use their own [mind]; we just tell and they accept.”*

This again reinforces a cultural difference in how we interact with our youth in the U.S. versus China; in the U.S. we have much more open lines of communication, allowing for two-way conversations. In China, conversations between adults and children are much more one-sided, with the child doing the majority of the listening.

Again, this cultural difference was depicted through the type of relationships that are generated between players and coaches. Heng stated:

The relationship between coaches and players is in great harmony. You are coordinated very well. You are not like in China. In China it is very clear, “I’m coach; you are student.” Here it is like a friendship but also like you are the parents treating the youngsters. The interpersonal relationship over here...people can talk freely and do not have to worry about constraints or worry about something you cannot say. And the environment is so much better over here.

When discussing these observations with the Chinese coaches, it was clear that the difference in communication between players and coaches in China was based on the idea of ‘respect.’ It is considered disrespectful for a child to question an adult, and as a result, there is less of a participatory system, which can be seen on the soccer field. The interesting thing to note is that although the Chinese coaches are entrenched in a different culture and background, they were very open to the idea of challenging their players more, implementing guided discovery, and converting to more open lines of communication. The researchers were not able to determine whether this openness to change shows a changing society in general, or whether the coaches who elected to participate in this exchange program are inherently more open to other ideas and ways of doing things.

Discussion

A change in cultural awareness or understanding cannot occur on its own. It requires not only self-awareness about one’s own personal biases and prejudices, (1) but also exposure to opportunities for change. The DISCUSS program provided that opportunity, allowing coaches and

administrators from China and the U.S to interact with each other and immerse themselves in another culture through a short term coaching program. The environment created through the DISCUSS program met most of the criteria set forth in Allport’s intergroup contact theory, (26) in addition to the fifth element introduced by Pettigrew. (28)

As DISCUSS was created specifically for the purpose of increasing cultural understanding between the U.S and China, organizers were able to create an environment that would be optimal for creating relationships and increasing understanding. Members participating in the program shared common goals and intergroup cooperation, had strong support from authorities (local and national governing bodies), and were in situations where friendships could develop. Of all criteria set forth by Allport, (26) the only one that was not fully present at all times was equal status within the situation. While administrators tried to create a situation that allowed for equal status, there were times when the Chinese participants deferred to their American counterparts, possibly because the American group took the lead in organizing and carrying out the program. However, ultimately, intergroup contact theory helped guide the design of this program, allowing for an ideal environment from which both cultures could learn and change.

As with most SFD programs, the goal of DISCUSS was change. But change can come in many forms: changes in perspective, behavior, decision making, or in understanding. The DISCUSS program’s ultimate goal was to elicit change in cultural understanding and as the results of this study show, that goal was accomplished. A discussion of themes one to three (a changed impression of Americans and American society, a changed view of American’s interest in soccer, and a perspective that sport and coaching were reflective of culture) will demonstrate this program’s value in reaching its goals.

An American enculturation?

Generally, cultural understanding is a time-intensive process that may require several cross-cultural experiences. Moreover, according to McMurray, as cited by Penman and Ellis, (43) being culturally sensitive does not mean simply “tolerating differences between groups of people,” but rather “being able to assess elements within the behavior patterns or social roles of a culture that make it special.” (p3) This does not occur instantaneously when subjected to a new culture. Thus, the short-term nature (13 days) of phase 1 was a concern for the program www.jsfd.org

administrators. Would there be enough time for the participants to experience a significant intercultural experience?

To address this potential issue, we placed participants with host families and built in two days of free time (no programming) so that participants could interact with their host families over a weekend's activities. The outcome of the host family experience was overwhelmingly positive, and as detailed in theme one of the findings, it constitutes one of the most impactful aspects of the exchange. In searching for meaning within these findings, we returned to the study-abroad literature to find how our findings related. In 2005, Langley and Breese utilized Spradley's (44) enculturation model to examine the impact of out-of-class experiences of students studying in Ireland. Enculturation is the natural process of learning a culture, (44) and study-abroad programs, in particular, "often foster further learning about a culture and move on to encourage an understanding of that culture, the end product of effective enculturation." (45, p314) Overall, the researchers suggest the most impactful experiences occurred in individuals that lived and studied with their host culture, and encouraged study-abroad administrators to ensure culturally-immersed interactions. Additionally, interactive short-term abroad experiences were important factors in developing creative thinking in students (46) and fostering socialization. (47) As demonstrated in the current study, the American media is omnipresent in its ability to establish perceptions of our culture. The current study's results may suggest the cultural contrast experienced through an exchange program, regardless of length, may provide a more accurate enculturation of American society as opposed to what is provided through the media. Further research in this area is recommended.

Diplomats of soccer

From the standpoint of the agency who funded the DISCUSS project (U.S. Department of State), this program was a sport diplomacy initiative. Though its reach extended beyond that and resulted in many learning outcomes, the results of the project provide significant justification for sport diplomacy as a tool. Most notably, seeing that sport and coaching were reflective of culture (theme three) demonstrates sport's power as a cross-cultural teaching tool, perhaps even more so than previously thought.

Sport diplomacy came into existence because of the perceived 'neutrality' of sport, with politicians viewing it as a testing ground for improving cultural relations, in

which sport was the vehicle that brought multiple countries to the table. (15) The results of this study indicate that sport might be more than just the 'carrot' to get different parties to the table. At its most simple, sport brings different people together, but as demonstrated by theme three, this project's results indicate much more than that. Simply by being present and observing or interacting with sport in another country, one can see and learn much about that society's culture. The relationships between coaches and players, the communication that occurs, and even the style of play depicted on the field can teach participants as much, if not more, about a country's society, than a more formal setting might. This research indicates that sport can serve as an even greater social tool in educating others on cultural understanding and awareness. It further reinforces the value of 'plus-sport' initiatives where development is the primary objective, and sport is used as a tool to support or achieve that. (48)

The results of this study gives weight to sport having a wider social role, and is good news for the SFD community. As so many SFD programs are externally funded, the realization that they can accomplish much more than the inherent value of the sport themselves is crucial justification for their existence. This is exemplified by the results of themes two and three in this study, which reflect the change and growth in cultural understanding between the U.S. and China.

One question that remains unanswered that the researchers suggest warrants further study is how willing and open participants are to change. The results of the current study indicate that a large amount of change occurred in the Chinese participants' cultural understanding of the U.S. Some of their comments indicate how willing they were to try different ways of teaching sport, educating children, and changing their ways of thinking. However, this begs the question as to whether those who choose to participate in an exchange program are inherently more open to new ways of thinking and changing, or whether the results are completely due to the program itself. Based on the design of this study, the researchers are unable to determine which was the case, but suggest that future assessments of similar SFD programs attempt to include ways of assessing this.

SFD evaluation implications

As mentioned earlier the field of SFD is young and growing, and like anything else, will encounter some growing pains. One area in particular that is in need of further development is program evaluation, as it relates to advancing knowledge in the field. In other words, a great

deal of focus is placed on program implementation and funding source fulfillment as SFD programs are very often driven by external funding; as a result, theoretical exploration is often overlooked. According to Coatler, as summarized by Lyras and Welty Peachy, (18) “the lack of a theoretical framework undergirding sport interventions hampers effective monitoring and evaluation...we should strive to advance theory to understand the conditions, structures and processes which can promote social change through sport.” (p2)

In response to this suggestion, the current study built in theory-driven, empirical research from the beginning. In addition, several data sources and methods of observation were identified and analyzed in preparation for the DISCUSS program so as to provide objective outcomes that not only met the funding source’s goals, but aimed to generate new knowledge for the field of SFD.

For the most part, this process was successful as it was an on-going process from the moment the proposal was generated, and it created a wealth of data to analyze. However, limitations still existed. For instance, while objectivity on behalf of the investigators was a distinct focus of the research group, objectivity of the participants a challenge.

As mentioned in the methods section, the Chinese participants were overly positive, and it took a concerted effort to elicit constructive criticism – so much that it felt as if the researchers were asking leading questions in the interview process. It was surmised that this was possibly the function of a couple variables including a Chinese culture that does not insult anyone who provides a gift or service, or perhaps it was the impact of providing a cost-free international trip and high-level coaching education. Reciprocity research suggests individuals receiving gifted products and services are hesitant to criticize the providers. (49-50) Regardless, cultural awareness of the evaluation process was an area that was overlooked, and future SFD programs should keep this outcome in mind when developing objective measures.

Conclusion

Organizing a two-way exchange program between countries with vastly different cultures is a large undertaking, and one that should only be entered into with clear goals in mind. The overarching goal of the DISCUSS program was to improve cultural understanding between people of China and the U.S, and while we knew that there were some immediate benefits to the program, it was not until this research was completed that we were able to say that

our main goal was achieved. Clearly, improvements in cultural understanding occurred among the Chinese participants. While certain aspects of the program such as utilizing sport and host family residency helped to accelerate the learning process, other factors like researcher bias and participants who were hesitant to give negative feedback, left room for improvement. However, these are the realities and bumps in the road that come with conducting research in any emerging or expanding field, such as SFD. Overall, the findings highlighted in this study provide further support for SFD and sport diplomacy as worthwhile endeavors in promoting cultural understanding.

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Appendix I

Pre-Departure Questionnaire I

1. How qualified do you feel you are at coaching youth soccer?
(1 = not at all qualified, 10 = extremely qualified)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. How qualified do you feel you are at coaching girls soccer?
(1 = not at all qualified, 10 = extremely qualified)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. What are your greatest strengths as a youth soccer coach?

4. What areas do you feel you need to improve upon in coaching youth soccer?

5. If you were involved in a coaches training program, what type of things would you want to be included in the program?

6. How long have you been coaching youth soccer?

7. Please rank your overall impression of the United States and American's in general.
(1 = extremely negative impression and 10 = extremely positive impression)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. What factors is your impression of the United States and American's based upon?

Appendix II

Post Trip Questionnaire #1

6-month follow up

1. How have you changed as a coach as a result of the DISCUSS program? Please elaborate.

2. What aspects of the program have you found most useful since returning to China and working with your team or other coaches? Please give specific examples.

3. Reflecting back on the DISCUSS program, which topics have you utilized since returning to China? Please circle all that apply:

- Communicating with players and parents
- Managing your team
- Differences in coaching boys and girls
- Youth clubs and structure
- Teaching more than just soccer (life skills, etc.)
- Sport psychology
- Girls health issues
- Tournaments and event planning
- Methods of coaching (Principles of play)

Appendix II *Cont.*

- Passing, receiving and dribbling
- Coaching small sided games
- Dynamic warm-up and technical warm-up
- Age-specific training
- Principles of attack in small groups
- Building from the back
- Attacking in the final ½ of the field
- Principles of defending individual to small groups
- Defensive movements
- Attack vs. defense

4. What would you rank as the top 3 most valuable topics in terms of usefulness to you and your team or coaches? Why?

5. Are there any topics that you wish we had covered, or covered in more detail? Please explain.

6. In what ways do you feel that your players have benefitted from your participation in the DISCUSS program? Please give examples.

7. Overall, how valuable do you feel your participation in the DISCUSS program was? (1 = not at all valuable; 10 = extremely valuable)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Reflecting on your visit to the United States as part of the DISCUSS program, how would you characterize your views of Americans and the United States now?

9. What 3 words would you use to best describe your impression of the United States and Americans?

10. Please rank your overall impression of the United States and American's in general. (1 = extremely negative impression; 10 = extremely positive impression)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. Have you had any opportunities to share your experiences in the United States with others in China since returning home? If so, please describe what you shared and the reaction of those you shared it with.

Original Research

Exploring the impact of sport participation in the Homeless World Cup on individuals with substance abuse or mental health disorders

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Abstract

Objective

To explore the role of the relationship between sport and social capital in negotiating improved social outcomes for homeless individuals with mental illness and/or substance abuse issues.

Method

A qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with 27 participants of the Melbourne 2008 Homeless World Cup (eight from Scotland and 19 from Australia). Interview questions focussed on the participants' interest of and participation in sport; factors influencing participation; any changes perceived by the individuals as a result of program participation; and in order to identify changes pre and post event, any current experiences of social exclusion.

Results

The role of social capital in mental health and substance abuse outcomes is addressed by the authors, in addition to the contribution of sport to the building of social capital.

Conclusions

Findings suggest that sport initially provided social bonding within a limited social network, yet over time other types of social capital (bridging and linking) were exhibited by participants, and enabled access to ancillary services

provided by the program that led to reductions or cessation of both substance abuse and symptoms of mental illness.

Implications

Sport can provide an effective vehicle for the accrual of social capital, which may positively impact the mental health and substance abuse patterns of participants from marginalised and at-risk communities.

Introduction

People with mental health problems are amongst the most excluded groups in society and consistently identify stigma, discrimination and exclusion as major barriers to health, welfare and quality of life.¹⁻³ For example, a study by Hawkins and Abrams⁴ noted that both mental illness and substance abuse create social obstacles, and are arguably the two most common factors leading to homelessness in Western nations. People with a mental illness are more likely to be homeless people or have insecure accommodation, in comparison to the general population.⁵ Once homeless, stigmatisation, isolation, the disruption of supportive relationships, substance use, physical illness and difficulty in obtaining medical care can all combine to reduce a person's likelihood of successfully addressing any mental health problem.⁵

Over the past 20 years in the United Kingdom (UK) there has been increasing political recognition that the health of individuals and communities is closely linked to, and affected by, social and economic deprivation⁶⁻⁸, with the

Keywords: sport; social capital; mental health; substance abuse; homeless persons; social support

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establishment of a Social Exclusion Unit by the UK Government in 1997, superseded in 2006 by the Social Exclusion Task Force. The Australian Government has recently followed suit, setting up a Social Inclusion Unit in 2007.⁹

Social inclusion is acknowledged as a fundamental step in improving disadvantaged people's social situations¹⁰, and as this paper will argue, sport is beginning to gain attention as a viable medium for promoting social inclusion.¹¹ This article presents an analysis of 27 participants of the 2008 Homeless World Cup (HWC) which was staged in Melbourne, Australia, using the theoretical framework of social capital¹²⁻¹⁶ to underpin the discussion of a sport development program directly engaging with mental illness and substance abuse.

Social exclusion and social capital

The experience of homelessness is one of marginalisation where the fundamental definition acknowledges a lack of permanent, stable housing that spurns social exclusion.¹⁷ Those affected by homelessness are grappling with factors including low incomes, lower comparative rates of public transport use, and less social contact.¹⁸

The concept of social capital is central to the debate on the potential of sport in social inclusion strategies. The link between social capital and health has been previously demonstrated¹⁹⁻²³; it has been argued that socially inclusive programs and activities have the potential to promote social capital with sport acting as a platform to deal with societal issues and to provide opportunities for disadvantaged members of society.²⁴ Sport facilitates the development of social capital as a result of its capacity to promote health, engage diverse audiences, and provide avenues for social inclusion. Given that the lack of resources and/or inadequate access to services make it difficult for individuals or groups to participate in society⁹, people experiencing homelessness are particularly excluded and have limited social capital. Whilst sport might not feature highly, if at all, on the social radar of homeless people, deliberate targeting by social development programs to remove perceived obstacles can be an effective engagement strategy. Sport development programs can offer homeless people, for example, regular social contact, access to sporting facilities, equipment and training, and a chance to reconnect with an activity that many will have participated in to some degree when younger.

Social capital can be defined as that which is produced by,

and invested in, social relationships for both individual and mutual benefit.²⁵ Social capital theory assumes that when a person participates in an activity with specific aims and outcomes and involves similar levels of participation from other individuals, it results in the accumulation of social capital for the participants. Social capital can be further defined as one of three types: bonding, bridging, and linking social capital.¹⁶ Bonding social capital refers to the close ties with family, friends and neighbours, whereas bridging capital is used to describe more distant ties between similar people, such as loose friendships and work colleagues.²⁵ The final concept, linking social capital, defines relationships between individual and groups drawn from dissimilar situations that cross boundaries, such as age, ethnic group or socioeconomic backgrounds.²⁵ It is linking capital which allows members to gain access to a much wider range of capital, information and ideas from formal organisations outside their own community.²⁶ Participation in sport has been shown to be an effective means to develop social capital through the development of linking capital, and to potentially address issues relating to social exclusion.²⁷⁻²⁹ Spaaij³⁰ acknowledges that effective analysis of the inter-relation between the ways social capital is created and operated through sport participation will assist in determining social outcomes.

Sport as a social intervention

Recognition of the efficacy of using sport as a catalyst for social inclusion is widespread²⁷, with the acknowledgment that 'the notion of the "power of sport" to do social good [and]...belief in the wider benefits of sport has rarely been so strongly advocated'.³¹ While evidence linking sport participation to improved social capital is contentious³²; Smart³³ argues that social capital can be conceptualised as advantages gained through social connectivity, an observable by-product of many sport programs. Sport participation can therefore be seen as an appropriate form of social intervention, because it is something that an individual partakes in during the course of normal societal participation.³⁴ Yet limitations of this approach are noted in that sport participation does not guarantee success in achieving both personal and societal goals, a fact that has been previously acknowledged by researchers advocating the use of sport as a catalyst for social inclusion.³⁴⁻³⁵

Although substantiated research focusing on the benefits of sport participation and social outcomes is lacking³⁶, Long and Sanderson³² claim that communities can benefit from sport participation through the empowerment of disadvantaged groups, better health outcomes, and enhanced

self-esteem. In addition, research has shown that social ties, such as those fostered through sport participation, can play an important role in psychological health.¹⁹

The Homeless World Cup

The Homeless World Cup (HWC) was set up in 2001 as a social enterprise whose mission is to use football as a tool to energise homeless people to change their own lives. It operates through a network of more than 70 National Partners throughout the world to support grassroots football programmes and foster enterprise development.³⁷ It showcases its year-round work by running an annual international football tournament, attended by teams of people from all around the world who have either experienced homelessness in the past two years or are undergoing drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Grassroots street soccer programs from across the globe select their HWC teams through processes of regional and national championships, nominations based on individual development and their ability to cope with the rigours of competition and international travel. Those selected by their home nation for the HWC are predominantly those who are more functional, moving towards more secure accommodation and who, importantly, can meet the visa requirements of the host nation. Teams are selected and funded by their home street soccer program through sponsorship and fundraising. However, the Homeless World Cup organisation may also provide financial support to participating teams from developing nations who do not have the capacity to be self-sufficient. All participants and their support staff are housed and fed by the host nation for the duration of the event.

The event provides: an opportunity to raise awareness of homelessness; a safe venue for homeless people around the globe to meet up; and the chance to show members of the public that they are individuals with needs, aspirations and skills just like any one of us. Indeed, parallel research which explored the attitudes on spectators and volunteers attending the Melbourne tournament³⁸ highlights the extent to which the above targets were achieved.

The partner project in each participating country selects the players who take part in the annual international tournament. To compete in this event, requirements are that a participant: must be 16 years or older; not have taken part in previous HWC tournaments; be asylum seekers or have received residency over the past 12 months and/or currently be in a substance misuse or alcohol rehabilitation programme; and have experienced homelessness at some point since the previous year's tournament or at some point

in the last two years. The Melbourne tournament was held in December 2008, in Federation Square. Fifty-six nations and approximately 600 players and support staff drawn from across the world were represented at the Melbourne HWC, including the hosting of the first Women's HWC.

The HWC provides an excellent case study of the ability of a sport event and associated community-level programs to develop individual participants by improving their health and engendering social capital. As noted most clearly by Coalter³⁹, sport programs can assist some participants only some of the time, and it is with this caveat in mind that the discussion moves to the Melbourne 2008 tournament, the Australian Street Socceroos and Street Soccer Scotland.

Method

Participants

Team members from both nations were interviewed prior to the Melbourne 2008 HWC and again after the event. The players representing Australia (n=19) were aged between 16 and 40 and drawn from very diverse backgrounds (predominantly Anglo-Saxon Australian, two African refugees, two Iranian refugees, one Aboriginal Australian). The participants declared issues with substance abuse (n=5) and mental illness (n=4), and half of them were currently experiencing a level of homelessness. There was one female player on the national team. Players were selected following their participation in their home nation's National Championships and through consultation with the regional coaches and coordinators regarding their attitudes and suitability for the experience.

The players representing Street Soccer Scotland (n=8) were between 17 and 45 years of age, and all were male and of white British ethnicity. None were living on the streets at the time of the interview, though all had been homeless at some point in the year before the event. Prior to the tournament, the majority were living temporarily with a partner (n=3) or family member (n=3); one was in homeless accommodation, and one had his own rented apartment. Three quarters reported a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse (n=6), more than half had served a prison sentence (n=5), and three stated they had had mental health issues (depression). The players were selected via a series of regional competitions (open to males and females), which culminated in a national tournament in Glasgow, Scotland, June of 2008.

The Australian team for the Melbourne 2008 HWC, as hosts, consisted of a team of eight, and another eleven reserve players. The reserve player role was for international teams that required a substitute player in the case of injury or player unavailability. The data from these participants have also been included in these findings, because a number of reserve players were promoted to the representative team during the course of the event. Eight players from the Scottish team were interviewed before the tournament with only five of them interviewed post-tournament, due to one player moving to England and the inability of two players to attend the interviews. Participants from both countries completed post-event interviews four to six months after the Melbourne 2008 HWC.

Procedure

A qualitative analysis of the experiences of the Australian and Scottish 2008 HWC participants was used to examine the outcomes of sport participation. The coaches for each team facilitated recruitment for the interviews while each researcher informally attended training sessions to meet the participants and undertake observations over a period of months in the lead up to the event and post-event. Participants were interviewed both pre- and post-event, with the exception of three participants, due to their inability to attend interviews. Post-event interviews were conducted four to six months after the Melbourne 2008 HWC.

The research was primarily focused upon personal change outcomes for individuals as a result of HWC participation, which was determined from semi-structured face to face interviews held both pre- and post-event. Consent was obtained from participants and all research was undertaken with the Human Research Ethics approvals from both participating universities. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and ranged from 30 to 90 minutes long.

Previous studies of sport development and social impact assessment^{28,40} were used as a catalyst for research questions. Areas of discussion included the participants' interest and participation in sport; factors influencing participation; any changes perceived by the individuals as a result of program participation; and in order to identify changes pre- and post-event, any current experiences of social exclusion.

Following an analysis of several transcripts, a schema for qualitatively coding the data was determined. NVivo software provided a platform to integrate observational and interview data. The primary codes extracted from the data

were based on categories identified to be relevant, which included mental health, drug and alcohol use, and social interaction. From these, secondary codes emerged that allowed further analysis of data.

Results

Several themes relating to social capital were identified, such as the role that sport played in developing social networks, the relationship between sport and social capital, and the effect of social capital on mental health and substance abuse. Responses from participants are used to discuss these key themes arising from the data analysis using excerpts from the interviews.

Mental health

As noted above, approximately one-third of the sample experienced some form of mental illness, predominantly depression, with 65% of these participants reporting that their experience with the Melbourne 2008 HWC and the regular participation in the soccer program had a positive impact on their mental health.

Depression is a common disorder within the homeless community, and it has been noted that the low levels of economic and social support within this population creates a distinct disadvantage when dealing with mental health issues.¹⁹ Social isolation was commonly cited as a feature of the lives of many participants, which often triggers or exacerbates symptoms of mental illness.

A while ago I wouldn't come out of my house because I've got mental health problems so I would stay home and do nothing and then I joined up with soccer which gets me out of the house and yeah it's quite good. (Player S – Australia)

The participants' perspectives revealed the role of the HWC and Street Soccer program as both a motivating factor for reintegration into the community, and the impact a significant achievement (i.e. national representation at an international sport event) had upon those experiencing mental illness.

Through getting picked for that world cup team, to represent Scotland – it made me see that my life is worth living ... it just changed my whole way of thinking. It let me see that people did think I was something, that I meant, something, that I could be something. People believed in me. (Player E – Scotland).

The time that participants spent training prior to the tournament helped the teams bond together, and gave them the opportunity to understand and support one another.

... it's been really good just getting to know all the boys from different areas, and getting to work on my self-esteem and self-confidence ... about two years ago I wouldn't be able to look people in the eye and talk to people I didn't know. It's just good to be part of a team now. (Player S – Scotland).

This reported trust in a social network, leading to improved self-esteem, confidence and motivation, has resonance with Putnam's¹⁵ social capital outcomes of trust, respect, and belonging.

Many participants reported an alleviation in symptoms of mental illness that were variously attributed by participants to the benefits of physical exertion, the establishment of a regular routine based around soccer training, the support of a social network (identifying the role of both teammates and coaches), and the support of staff in encouraging self-monitoring of mental illness and linking into appropriate health support services. However, one often overlooked outcome from sport participation is the intrinsic value of sport itself to the individual. The value of time and space for recreation, and a moment of joy, particularly for those experiencing mental illness, however brief, cannot be underestimated for these marginalised participants:

... it's a great experience for anyone that gets involved, whether you're a player, a coach, a volunteer, it doesn't matter, you know? It's a great experience and the benefits of it on society are the people, you know? If you can have 10 homeless guys out there smiling because they're playing soccer, that's 10 that weren't smiling at the start of the day. And that makes a difference. (Player R – Australia).

All Scottish players interviewed reported high satisfaction with the HWC tournament, and felt great pride and satisfaction in having been selected to represent their country. Being in the spotlight gave them all a degree of confidence, and the feeling of support they got from fellow competitors, and spectators in Melbourne was 'brilliant'. They also described a great sense of 'community' – both from being a part of the Scottish team, and being welcomed and supported by so many in Melbourne. This was similar upon their return home, when family and friends viewed the team and their efforts with pride and joy. Players returned energised, and with plans for the future. At the time of the second interview, one had secured a new job,

one was completing training qualifications, one had applied for a college course, and one was joining the army. The remaining player did not have a paid job, but was taking part in a lot of drama activities, and continuing his voluntary work. All players who had previously undertaken drug rehabilitation remained abstinent post tournament, and all reported improved physical health and stamina, although two were still smoking cigarettes. The Australian athletes reported experiences and responses that were similar to the Scottish participants at the event, with a wide variety of outcomes including enrolment into vocational education programs, reunion with estranged family and an on-going sense of pride in their achievements, evidenced by their role as ambassadors and leaders in their home street soccer programs.

These outcomes, although positive, cannot be wholly or solely attributed to the sport participation experience. The support provided through the grassroots street soccer programs, and through the welfare agencies and social networks also largely facilitated these personal outcomes. The HWC, however, provided the participants with a unique experience of community and welcome, different to what they typically experience in their everyday lives.

Substance abuse

A history of substance abuse was acknowledged by 55% of participants, with 88% of those involved reporting their involvement in ongoing rehabilitation or support, or sobriety. The requirement of the program to be drug and alcohol free provided a motivation for participants to comply and illustrates the importance of shared values within social networks contributing to health outcomes: *"My whole social network just now is based round being in recovery and Narcotics Anonymous (NA). Every night of the week, I go to an NA meeting."* (Player D – Scotland)

Additionally, three of the Scottish participants engaged in voluntary support work between two and four nights a week with the drug rehabilitation organisation they themselves had attended, while two were working with young people:

I do voluntary work on a Monday and Thursday night with [local youth organisation]. I'm going to start doing a wee coaching session with them and just get them playing football and that ... I'm just doing it to put a wee bit back in, to show my appreciation for what they've done for me, because without them, I wouldn't be sitting here today, I know that for a fact. (Player S – Scotland)

Participants reported using training sessions as a substitute for drinking, and one player completed a tertiary education program in drug and alcohol counselling, and was actively working in this capacity in the community.

Sport participation seems to have had a positive reductive effect on a variety of substance abuse behaviours, as evidenced by the following quote:

You meet new people, hang out with mates and you're not smoking, you're not drinking, you're not popping pills, you're not shooting shit up... it's just hanging out with a really good bunch of people and they're all getting their life back together. (Player C – Australia)

A challenge for people reducing or abstaining from substance abuse is the need to develop a new network of relationships with non-using people⁴; sport programs such as the HWC and street soccer can play a vital role in engaging participants with a new peer group, to develop friendships and support networks.

It [street soccer program] gives you something to do, having something to do during the day – drugs are a very social thing... Now having things like this can give you a couple of hours a week where it is something social ... keeps me from thinking of drugs, helps me stop drinking too, stay off the piss. Gives me something to do. Associate with people, you know have a bit of lifestyle about me, rather than, you know, going back to the old ways. (Player B – Australia).

There is a sense of increased chances outside the sporting arena, as one Scottish player said, *“I know people that have played in the Homeless World Cup in the past. The doors that open for you and the opportunities that come are brilliant, so hopefully I’ll get some opportunities when we come back”* (Player E - Scotland).

Discussion

While previous research undertaken within the homeless community found that social support could alleviate psychological symptoms⁴, this study analyses the contribution of a sporting program to act as the catalyst for social participation. Research evidence illustrates that physical activity, and associated processes, can contribute positively to mental health⁴¹⁻⁴², in addition to providing physical health and psychological benefits as an adjunct to treatment in complex mental health problems, including alcohol and drug rehabilitation.⁴³ Both physiological factors, such as increased levels of endorphins triggered by exercise,

and sociological factors, such as self-identification as a team member, and participation in social activities relating to sport, may explain the effects.⁴⁴ Exercise also contributes to an improved effect on anxiety, depression, mood and emotion, self-esteem and psychological dysfunction.⁴⁵⁻⁴⁶ While Oughton and Tacon⁴⁴ reported limited evidence regarding the type, intensity, duration and frequency of exercise that maximises mental health benefits, they concluded that benefits seem to be dose related, correlating an increase of physical activity within a reasonable range with mental health benefits.

The HWC and street soccer programs provide opportunities for the development of bonding capital via reunions with families, developing new peer and friendship groups and the opportunity to participate in an activity with people experiencing similar health issues and disadvantage. The importance of bonding social capital or the development of a sense of community and peers is invaluable for participants. Additionally, by facilitating new friendships and relationships, and re-establishing links with family, participants are in an improved position to seek advice and support to manage their health problems. These findings are in accord with themes identified by Schulenkorf, Thompson and Schlenker⁴⁷, who additionally highlight the importance of the “level playing field” and “neutral space” for interaction, which was provided by the HWC.

The role of the program staff, particularly the coaching staff who develop a very close and supportive relationship with the participants, in facilitating linking social capital is also clearly evidenced throughout the analysis. Sport programs provide an opportunity for participants to develop their social skills and as such develop bridging and linking opportunities for participants.⁴

Sport programs can also act as a form of social intervention. The HWC provides the opportunity for people experiencing homelessness, mental illness or substance abuse, with opportunities for interactions with others from the community such as volunteers and coaches; additionally, information about and access to new support networks and services to improve their health outcomes are provided.

However, the limitation of these findings is informed by the transitory nature of participants’ lives, resulting in the possibility that this may lead to differing current-day outcomes. It must also be noted that the efficacy and relevance of this study is limited by the small sample of participants, the transience of participants’ lives which led to three of the Scottish players being unavailable for follow-

up interviews, and the necessity to view the outcomes within the context of a cycle that ebbs and flows with improvements and setbacks but leads to overall progression.

Conclusion

This paper furthers the argument previously outlined that an increase in social capital can contribute to positive mental health and substance abuse outcomes by detailing a specific sporting program that has achieved a positive outcome for homeless individuals afflicted by such complex and often co-occurring issues. Sporting events such as the HWC and specifically the relationships and networks developed between the participants, staff and volunteers can provide an effective vehicle for the accrual of social capital, which may positively impact the mental health and substance abuse patterns of the majority of participants. It is not 'sport' itself that increases social capital, but rather the setting and *raison d'être* of the Homeless World Cup, and all the people involved, such as players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators, and the ensuing linking and bonding that enable social capital to develop.

Social participation in a sporting team facilitated improved social capital for participants by providing an opportunity for social bonding with other participants, social bridging with staff members and social linking with affiliated health services. Subsequent health outcomes, such as alleviation of mental health symptoms, and reduced substance abuse, have been evidenced within this sample. Although not quantifiably a direct or causal result, the impacts of the program better place the participants in achieving their more tangible goals.

Recent research by the HWC's Norwegian National Partner⁴⁸ shows that one of the greatest motivators reported by players for reducing substance abuse is participation in the HWC. The evaluation suggests that participating in the HWC also has a general influence on the perceived benefits, whereby former national team players experience greater positive life changes over time as opposed to those who have not had this opportunity. This illustrates the importance of ensuring that as many people as possible get the opportunity to participate in a HWC, as long as they meet the predetermined criteria and the financial situation allows it. The Homeless World Cup offers a change of scenery, challenges stereotyping, and players who may have been abused or ignored by members of the public the week before, are cheered by thousands and treated as soccer heroes during the tournament. The feeling of belonging, the challenge of working in a team, regaining a health-oriented

attitude towards life, self-esteem, and last but not least, the experience of fun offers a powerful combination to help a person change their life.

While the HWC is an annual, global event that provides a very clear incentive for participation, it is clear that the street football organisations, such as the Australian Community Street Soccer Program and Street Soccer Scotland, are the source of ongoing support and continuity which is so often non-existent for members of the homeless community. These programs facilitated and led the way for these participants and their opportunities for social inclusion and linking in to health services, and are thereby likely to provide the most significant social capital impacts.

Some small-scale impact surveys have been conducted post tournament⁴⁹⁻⁵², but the extent to which the HWC has impacted on the players' lives has yet to be conclusively established. A longitudinal analysis would be beneficial to further understand the long-term effects of the HWC on its participants, particularly if it were from a non-western-centric perspective. Several players stated that they had found the HWC event very humbling, and meeting players from other countries and cultures had made them look at their lives from a different and more positive perspective. What remains to be seen is the extent to which this positivity translates into positive action, and the mechanisms through which this is facilitated.

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Review

Sport and crime prevention: Individuality and transferability in research**David Ekholm¹**¹ Linköping University, Department of Social and Welfare Studies, Sweden*Corresponding author email: david.ekholm@liu.se***Abstract**

Researchers have examined sport practices as a means of crime prevention. The article reviews the international body of literature on this subject from a social constructionist perspective. By exploring the idea of sport as a means of crime prevention, the article considers what is described on the subject and how these descriptions are articulated. Through a content analysis, the article aims to develop categories and provide an analytical discussion of the findings. The descriptive analysis reveals that, although researchers are most notably critical of putting faith in sport for social objectives, there is research that affirms the role of sport in crime prevention. When sport is upheld as a means of crime prevention, two modes of prevention are emphasised, called the averting-mode and the social change-mode. The discussion focuses primarily on how the dominant social change-mode is articulated and how this social change becomes a meaningful concept as portrayed in discourses on individuality and transferability. The importance and potential consequences of framing crime as a social problem and of framing sport as a solution in response are also discussed. Finally, the article sets out the direction for further research on sport as a means of crime prevention.

Introduction

Sport practices with social objectives – such as public health, social and economic regeneration, active citizenship, drug abuse prevention, and crime prevention – have emerged in the last few decades as an increasingly

important element in sport and society (1). Practices with such objectives have been surrounded by common-sense assumptions that sport can contribute in different ways to positive social development (2-4). This has been examined and debated in research (5-13).

Sport as a means to achieve social objectives is primarily a Western phenomenon. International sport for development programmes has targeted wide-ranging objectives such as peace (14,15), human rights (14) and the fight against HIV/AIDS (14,16,17). Such programmes have been carried out by Western NGOs (14-16,18) and exported to “Two-Third World” societies (17). Sport for development has accordingly been celebrated by the UN and associated bodies (15,17,19,20). In the US in the 1980s and 1990s, new cost-effective ways were acclaimed as targeting urban social problems (6,21) in light of public spending cuts (21,22), including Midnight Basketball programmes (11,22). In the UK as well, sport for crime prevention gained attention as part of New Labour’s reform policies in the 1990s. New ideas in public administration and social policy emphasised civil society and the voluntary sector (rather than the welfare state) to address social problems, and sport was considered a suitable means for social inclusion in the local community and for active citizenship (1,3,19,23-26). These tendencies are further mirrored, for instance, in Australian and Canadian (19) social policy. Sport has also gained wider recognition in Scandinavian social policy (27-29).

Claims-making (30) advocates of sport as a means of crime prevention, such as policy-makers, social problem activists and other actors in society, have promoted sport to deal with

or even solve various social problems, resulting in the emergence of programmes and practices using sport to prevent crime (1,31).

Programmes that are politically initiated, supported and financed require evidence-based methods in their practices (1). Research has examined and evaluated the effects of such sport practices (8,32), and scientists “are at the top of the hierarchy of credibility” in making claims about social problems (30 p39). It is therefore important to systematise the outcome of this scientific knowledge. It should be noted that, even though a considerable amount of research is critical of sport as a means of crime prevention and questions such a notion (2,3,6,10), sport practices are still nourished by claims from the scientific discourse in research.

The present article reviews the research literature on sport as a means of crime prevention. The aim is to explore the idea of sport as a means of crime prevention as expressed in research, examine the assumptions underlying this idea, and consider how these assumptions are articulated. This aim is operationalised with the help of two questions. First, *what* does research focus on when sport is described as a means of crime prevention? The purpose here is to provide a description of the research object, questions and findings in the current literature on sport as a means of crime prevention. Second, *how* are these descriptions of the research object, questions and findings articulated? The purpose here is to discuss and analyse the descriptions and prevalent modes of prevention in terms of implicit assumptions and discourses in the literature reviewed in order to make them explicit.

Consequently, the article does not observe sport practices, but rather observes how researchers observe and articulate descriptions about sport practices. ‘Research on sport as a means of crime prevention’, rather than ‘sport as a means of crime prevention’ as such, is within the scope of observation, and for that reason this article does not provide any definition of sport or of sport practices other than those articulated in the observed research literature. The research literature covers a disparate field of sport practices, varying from sport in rehabilitation programmes to voluntary organisational practices. Definitions of sport practices covered in the literature are extensive, yet they all are signified as sport and thus may be included in the selection. In short, sport thus refers to practices of physical activity signified as sport, targeting children and youth, performed in an organised setting, in the presence of a supervisor. This article does not investigate crime or crime prevention as

such, nor is any legal definition provided. Instead, research articulating crime, and by extension anti-social behaviour, delinquency and deviance related to crime, is considered. Research on sport as a means of crime prevention covers various types of crime prevention such as primary, secondary and tertiary and also identifies a number of social objectives with respect to crime prevention. Furthermore, claims made in research on sport about aspects other than crime prevention, such as sport generating crime, corruption, public order offences and hooliganism, are also beyond the scope of this article.

The analysis of the descriptions that current research provides is based on a systematic literature review. The methodology of inductive category development is introduced in the following section. The third section is comprised of a descriptive exposition of the literature reviewed concerning what is observed and articulated in the literature. The exposition focuses on prominent research questions and findings in the literature, and perspectives that are both supportive and critical of sport as a means of crime prevention are identified. The aim of the subsequent section is to provide a reflective discussion by critically examining the findings in the literature. The analytical discussion focuses on how the idea of sport as a means of crime prevention has been underpinned in the research literature, targeting in particular the concepts and assumptions underlying this idea. The article argues that the literature covering research on sport as a means of crime prevention can be arranged into two separate strands and modes of prevention: first, the averting-mode and second, the social change-mode. The discussion demonstrates that descriptions predominantly emphasise sport as an instrument to promote social change and thus that the social change-mode is the dominant strand in sport for crime prevention. The article further argues that the social change-mode prevalent in sport becomes meaningful through discourses on individuality and transferability, respectively. These two discourses create order in the research field, otherwise emphasising disparate aspects with respect to sport as a means of crime prevention. The discourses on individuality and transferability are moreover discussed in terms of potential consequences for framing crime as a social problem and of sport as a solution. In the final section, the article is summarised and further conclusions are presented.

Methods: procedures in selection and analysis

The article is based on a literature review and is organised in line with the two questions presented above, formulated in terms of *what* and *how*. These review approaches

stress first the demarcations of the literature reviewed and second the utilisation of analytical method (33).

Literature reviewed: searches and selection

The literature reviewed consists of some 55 research publications, including scientific articles, research reports, book chapters and monographs. The literature has been chosen using two methods of selection – database searches and a systematic review of references in the literature selected. First, social science databases including Scopus, the Social Science Citation Index, Sociological Abstracts, ERIC and Swedish Libris were used to gather mainly articles in scientific journals and dissertations. The following keywords were used in various combinations in the international databases: (a) sport, athlet* and “physical activity”, respectively; (b) “social problem*”, crim*, delinquen* and devian*, respectively, thus generating searches such as sport AND “social problem*” AND crim* or athlet* AND devian*. Furthermore the keywords (c) “social work”, (d) leisure and (e) “sport program*” were used in combinations with the other keywords. The keyword (f) idrottssociologi (English: sociology of sport) was used in the Swedish database Libris. The research literature identified was then selected based on two criteria – whether the text deals with research on sport relative to crime and criminality or delinquency, or on sport as a method of crime prevention or related social objectives in social work. Second, the literature selected was then subjected to a systematic review of references. The selection criteria noted above were also applied to the latter selection method. Saturation was reached given that the references reviewed referred to a satisfactory degree to literature already identified.

From the database searches, 25 publications (of a total 55), predominantly peer-reviewed articles, were identified and selected. From the systematic review of references, another 30 or so publications were selected. In all, 38 peer-reviewed international articles in English, 9 book chapters, 8 research reports (from the US, the UK, Australia, Canada and Sweden) and 6 monographs, were included. All publications included are in English, except for 3 cases in Swedish. 25 of the international peer-reviewed articles are empirically driven and target questions such as whether sport works to prevent crime, what aspects of sport work, and how sport should further be designed to work. Qualitative and quantitative designs each represent half of the peer-reviewed articles. Furthermore, the empirically driven approach is dominant in the research reports. In addition, about 12 of the peer-reviewed journal articles are more theoretically driven, emphasising sport as a social phenomenon, often critically assessing sport as a means of

external objectives. The monographs and book chapters cover both empirically driven approaches and more theoretically oriented designs. The literature included covers a broad spectrum of methodological approaches. These also include literature reviews and meta-theoretical studies. The literature reviewed further covers research from various disciplines such as sociology, social work, pedagogy and education, criminology, sport studies and political science.

Analytical procedures: descriptive analysis and analytical discussion

The themes, modes and discourses in this article emerged from an inductive process aimed at structuring the complexity in the literature reviewed, from a manifest level to a higher abstract level. This could be illustrated in three steps.

First, concrete articulations that were part of the descriptive analysis (corresponding to the *what* question) were thematised and categorised in three steps, emphasising inductive category development (34). (a) Reading of literature: the literature selected was read thoroughly and important aspects regarding aims, theoretical setting and results were noted systematically in a list; (b) Thematisation of literature: the literature was thematised based on its content regarding the two questions What research questions are articulated? What central themes emerge in research? and (c) Categorisation of literature: certain patterns emerged in the thematisation, from which categories could be developed. Examples among the categories that emerged and which were apparent in the literature reviewed were for instance the question of “how can sport contribute to positive development?” and the theme of “empowerment”.

Second, themes in various categories were structured primarily in two modes of prevention, based on the rationale of prevention articulated. Themes expressed in the descriptive analysis and themes reflected upon in the analytical discussion are both structured as either averting crime or facilitating social change. That is, manifest themes such as “empowerment” and “education” address different aspects of social change and are thus considered part of the social change-mode. The social change-mode is an abstract concept and a theoretical construction not explicitly manifest in the literature reviewed, although it is used in this article to structure complexity and to contribute to further discussion.

Third, the analytical discussion (corresponding to the *how* question) comprises a reflective, critical examination. This discussion is based on the results of the descriptive analysis (research objects, questions and findings) and abstract concepts of prevention modes. The analytical discussion results in the identification of two prominent discourses (on individuality and transferability) in the social change-mode, which are abstract concepts supporting the idea of sport as a means of crime prevention with respect to aspects of social change. The analytical discussion is inspired by a constructionist view of discourse (35) and of social problems (30). This means that the discussion is aimed at examining how objects, questions and findings described in literature, abstracted as modes of prevention, become meaningful through prominent discourse and moreover constitute the idea of sport as a means of crime prevention. Accordingly, these discourses are vital for framing the meaning of social problems and corresponding solutions. This approach can be understood as a second-order observation (36-38) in examining and thus observing how research observes and how these observations are articulated.

The constructionist approach provides a perspective from which descriptions that generate scientific discourse – which in turn influence policy-making and the organisation of sport initiatives with social objectives – can be explored and critically assessed in terms of their underlying assumptions and implicit notions. Such a constructionist approach is embedded in the aim and further research questions of this article.

Descriptive analysis: the literature reviewed

Research on sport as a means of crime prevention is articulated through three categories of distinct research questions. First, does sport prevent or reduce crime or criminal behaviour? Second, how can sport contribute to positive development regarding crime prevention? Third, how can sport be designed in order to be successful with respect to crime prevention? These questions reflect an empirically driven emphasis in the reviewed literature (39). The literature features perspectives that are both supportive and critical of the potential of sport as a means of crime prevention. Literature emphasising a critical view is reported in a separate subsection.

Does sport prevent or reduce crime or criminal behaviour?

A review of the literature yields three findings. First, there is a lack of clear evidence on the relationship between sport

and crime prevention (3,32). Second, there is nothing inherent in sport that makes it suitable for crime prevention (5,6,8,25,40,41). Third, activities are difficult to evaluate due to poor theorisation (3,41), and furthermore relations are considered mediated (1,3,8,22,42-44).

Quantitative studies accordingly show shifting findings. Most notably, some studies stress a lack of support for causal relations between sport and crime prevention (2,3,5,25,45), while other studies emphasise a relationship between participation in sport and lower levels of crime (46-49). Moreover, some findings suggest that participation in power sports, such as boxing, wrestling, weightlifting and martial arts, which focuses on elements of fighting and strength, could lead to increased antisocial involvement (50).

How can sport contribute to positive development regarding crime prevention?

Though evidence is lacking, evaluations are problematic and no inherent essence in sport is identified, certain aspects in sport practices are highlighted as potentially mediating the relation with crime prevention. Two categories of crime prevention are discernible in the literature reviewed. They are presented here as two modes of prevention. First, the averting-mode stresses only the goal of averting antisocial involvement or crime and is defined by the absence of deviance. Second, the social change-mode stresses change in various circumstances that could cause criminality and is accordingly defined by the presence of progression (i.e. more than just averting a specific behaviour or activity).

The averting-mode: Two aspects focused on averting criminal or anti-social activities stand out. First, the literature reviewed stresses that participation in sport could constitute diversion for youth in two ways. In one sense, sport can physically divert young people from criminal or deviant activities: one cannot simultaneously be engaged in criminal activities outside the sport setting and perform sport activities (22,31,43). However, deviant behaviour is obviously possible within the sport setting (51). In the other sense, sport – being fun, exciting and entertaining – can divert attention from criminal environments and activities (8,31,41,43,44,52-54). Sport may also offer its participants structure and a framework and thus divert youth from restlessness (43).

Second, the literature reviewed suggests deterrence as a crime-preventive mechanism. This emphasises that youth would be deterred from criminal or deviant behaviour when

they recognise a higher risk of detection by supervising adults, coaches, police (22,55) or staff (52,53) in the sporting setting (31).

The social change-mode: Four aspects focused on changing circumstances with regard to crime prevention emerged in the literature review. First, research suggests that voluntary participation in sport creates good conditions for contributing to the development of personal and social relations. This has been considered to constitute forms of social capital in sport (though not explicitly related to crime prevention) (56,57). Sport is thus considered an arena where different youth of different social standings meet and interact. In this respect, it is debated whether development of personal and social relations could promote crime prevention through community development, which implies that sport can lead to relations in the community based on trust and reciprocity and that this could benefit crime prevention efforts (25). Furthermore, this emphasises sport as a means of community development since it contributes to collective identities and facilitates active citizenship, which in turn contribute to the establishment of social networks in civil society (8,57). In addition, efforts to prevent crime by integrating ethnic minorities can be viewed as community development (58,59). Research also stresses that sport can promote personal relations with equals from different social contexts (31,60), between youth and staff in social projects (52,53), coaches (10,25,31,61), parents and other adults (62), and positive role models (31,41,43,59,60).

Second, sport is often referred to as a hook – a way to reach out to individuals or enter environments that would otherwise be inaccessible. This is especially prominent in inspiring young people to take part in and continue social projects aimed at crime prevention (10,31,61). A hook can thus be described as using sport to change the social environment for youth.

Third, empowerment can be considered from two perspectives. First, empowerment for individual activity and responsibility is presented as strengthening the functions and abilities of individuals to become socially mobile in an established society. Education is emphasised here (61). This view of empowerment could be understood as an expression of a more common focus on active citizenship in public policy (1,8,57), with an emphasis on individual autonomy to handle social problems (57). Second, empowerment for societal change (2,10) is presented as a means of education, to stimulate emancipation and prevent youth from being subjected to injustice and marginalisation in a social structure, which in

turn is the cause of social problems (10). Possibly in this sense, sport could offer activities that question ideologies through which an unfair society is reproduced (10).

Fourth, three aspects of pro-social development are evident in the reviewed literature. First, the self-image of individuals emphasises that success in the sporting effort, though not possible for everyone (31), can lead to improved self-confidence, self-esteem and self-control (8,41,43,53,62-65), which in turn could lead to reduced impulsiveness and risk-taking (8) and also enhance educational skills and promote employability (8). Second, life skills emphasise how sport can offer skills and values necessary in life. Skills acquired in sport, such as communicative and cognitive skills, goal attainment, aggression control, problem solving and learning to give and receive feedback, could be transferred to other spheres of life. Hence it is argued that sport helps young people play “the game of life” (40,66). There are also claims that active leadership could be developed in deviant youth through sport, based on the notion of using leadership traits in criminally experienced youth within a sport setting (58). Third, the relation between physical health and mental health stresses that sport leads to good physical health (41,43,52,57), which subsequently improves mental health (43,63). Developing a sound lifestyle is essential in rehabilitation from deviant or criminal lifestyles (49,66).

How can sport be designed in order to be successful in preventing crime?

Sport practices can be organised in different ways to promote a positive development in terms of crime prevention. First, one must recognise the value of non-sport components since sport itself has no inherent or essential value with respect to crime prevention (2). This could, for example, be education (10) in non-violence, the importance of good health and self-control, and a sense of responsibility for oneself and for others (2). Second, sport practices need to de-emphasise competitive elements and thus stress non-competitive components (8,52,54,62,64). Sport practices instead should emphasise personal and social relations with other youth and adults (31,52,54,60,62,67); they should consist of a minimum of formal rules and limitations (31,52,54); be performed individually or in smaller groups where participants experience independence and participation (8,31,52); and emphasise internal motivation and individualised standards of success (31,54) in a task-oriented setting (64). Third, sport practices should have a rational, explicit development

plan and offer arrangements in which participants can reflect on and understand criminal behaviour (31). In this respect, sport practices should also acknowledge the importance of policy-makers and sport organisations (62,68).

Critique of sport as a means of crime prevention

A considerable body of research articulates a more critical perspective, highlighting how sport should instead be perceived with a focus on negative aspects regarding its potential in crime prevention. With respect to this criticism six different aspects are discernible.

First, the literature suggests that since it has been argued that sport does not reduce poverty, unemployment or social welfare cuts, which are considered to be foundations of crime, faith in sport instead obscures structural explanations of social problems and further legitimises structures in society that reproduce the foundations of crime (6,8,21,61,69). In this respect, sport alone is considered an all too simple solution (6,8,21), and also contributes to ideas of individual responsabilisation (70).

Second, the literature suggests that sport organisations are primarily interested in sport – not social work; thus sport is not a social service. There is an exaggerated belief in the interest and possibilities of sport organisations in attracting and caring for socially excluded or deviant youth (23).

Third, aspects of selection and stratification emerge in the literature reviewed. Sport practices mainly attract youth from economically and socially privileged environments (23,43,62,71). This calls into question what groups of socially vulnerable youth that sport could reach out to (23). There is also a stratifying function in various sport practices, exemplified by activities targeting black youth from disadvantaged areas that emphasise control and discipline while activities targeting white youth from wealthy areas emphasise prosperity and social mobility. Furthermore, sport practices are more likely to lead to exclusive bonding than to inclusive bridging, strengthening rather than transcending social boundaries (2). This function of sport, however, has been conceived as effectuating social control, normalisation and re-socialisation in a society characterised by hierarchical relations through subordination and control over bodies, identities and social relations (10).

Fourth, the literature describes competition and subordination as a problem because the logic and values of competition seem to dominate (62) and exclude other

possible ideals in sport (57,72). Conventional sport in many ways reflects the social milieus in which vulnerable youths have already experienced failure (54). In this regard, sport can have a negative effect (52). The individual's drive to defeat others leads to practices that target ranking, subordination and selection (57). The logic of competition could also result in doping, use of performance-enhancing drugs and cheating (73).

Fifth, it is suggested that sport ritualises and legitimises violence and confrontation in connection with ideals of masculinity (62,73,74). The question is therefore whether sport is a suitable means for responding to problems of deviancy or crime since it replicates and legitimises experiences of excitement that could otherwise be found in drug use or criminality (75). Research also indicates that power sports in particular lead to the acquisition of aggressive skills and behaviours that could be brought into play outside the sport setting (50). Moreover, an emphasis on violence in sport highlights sexual violence among athletes (76).

Sixth, the literature describes how a belief in social fostering through sport is often exaggerated, how values adopted and skills acquired in sport are not automatically transferred to broader society, and how they are not necessarily needed in society at large (64). There is thus a limited transferability, reducing the potential use of sport for social objectives.

A brief summary of the descriptive reading

Exposing disparate directions and outlooks on sport as a means of crime prevention, the research demonstrates a reasonably cohesive imagery. First, the literature emphasises a lack of evidence, the absence of essential inherent values in sport, and the notion that relations between sport and crime prevention are indirect and mediated. Second, it stresses two modes for sport aimed at crime prevention – however, each is met with criticism. The averting-mode of diversion and deterrence could be considered relevant only for certain groups of youth included in sport settings. The social change-mode of developing personal and social relations could be viewed as stratifying and promoting exclusive bonding; the hook of sport could be seen as relevant only to those interested in sport; empowerment could be said to emphasise individual activity and responsibility, hence obscuring structural interventions and also exercising social control; pro-social development could be disputed while sport could also lead to the development

of anti-social skills such as cheating, violence and abuse. Third, in order to be successful, sport as a means of crime prevention should emphasise non-sport components such as education in non-violence and moral values, de-emphasise competition and deploy a rational and explicit development plan.

Discussion: prominent discourses

The descriptions and themes presented above provide an interconnected yet incongruent imagery of sport as a means of crime prevention. The notion of sport in this sense has been critically observed, examined, and questioned in the research. Nonetheless, strong beliefs are attached to the notion and there is considerable research that emphasises the potential for crime prevention in sport practices.

In light of the aim of this article, identifying articulations of the idea of sport as a means of crime prevention, attention in this section will be paid to scientific knowledge that highlights the potential of sport to prevent crime. I will accordingly emphasise the two modes of prevention and the standards for the successful design of sport practices described above. The findings are contextualised by the critical views of sport noted above and the partial lack of statistical evidence on crime prevention.

The inductive approach of categorising various aspects of sport practices that potentially mediate crime prevention has resulted into two modes of prevention: the averting-mode and the social change-mode. Descriptions in the literature largely portray crime prevention as something more than just averting crime, further highlighting the goal of social change in various aspects. This emphasis is also prominent in the literature on how to design practices for prevention. In this sense, the social change-mode emerges as the dominant mode of prevention, and further focus will be given to this in the discussion. Nichols (31) has identified three mechanisms of crime prevention in sport: diversion, deterrence and pro-social development. Categorisations and modes of prevention that have emerged from the literature under review here seemingly correspond with these mechanisms, although it should be noted that Nichols has categorised actual practices while the present study has examined descriptions in research on such practices.

Social change and four prominent aspects

Personal and social relations, empowerment, pro-social development, and education in non-violence and moral values are the four main categories that primarily constitute

the social change-mode. These concepts are structured around concepts of individuality and transferability. This can be illustrated by the following quotations.

The success of utilising sport and exercise, as a means of facilitating delinquent rehabilitation, lies particularly in the intricacies of the counselling; the provision of purposeful activities, and adoption of an individualistic approach, leading to the recognition of individual motivations /.../. (52 p547)

[M]any skills inherent in recreation and sport are life skills transferable to other life endeavours, and can be understood by youths from a sport or games context. Through teaching recreational games for understanding, it is possible to help our adolescent clients to better understand, and play, the game of life. (66 p41)

Development of personal and social relations is described in relation to trustworthy, reciprocal relations between individuals contributing to community development. In that sense, the category requires a concept of individuality. Moreover, it is a central aspect of personal and social relations that the benefits from these relations are also valid outside the sport setting. Relations that are only valid inside the sport setting would be of less use for crime prevention. Instead the point of social relations attained in the sport setting is the transference to broader society. In that respect, transferability is also an inevitable concept, given the understanding that personal and social relations are an aspect of social change in terms of sport as a means of crime prevention.

In the following quotations, it is argued that personal relations from the sport setting can result in trust and reciprocity in relations between equals and with the community as a whole.

The coming together of staff and young people from all the units to take part in sport and activity twice a week has had positive effect on relationships between all involved. /.../ Prior to the CtG [Closing the Gap] intervention young people in the four units rarely mixed, on the occasions they did, they tended to be aggressive towards one another. Due to the sports sessions new friendships have developed /.../. (53 p40)

Rather than being a sports project, diversionary scheme or punitive measure, the initiative is about community development in a real sense, since it is about developing relationships with people on the basis of trust and mutual...

...understanding as a platform for building a broader range of relationships and opportunities. (75 p390)

Empowerment is described in relation to individual activity and responsibility as well as societal change. Sport is described as making it possible for individuals to act in certain non-criminal ways. Given the emphasis on a person's individual responsibility for each action and lifestyle or on that person's individual power to change aspects of society, the individual is still the subject of empowerment; the concept of empowerment is thus associated with the concept of individuality. Moreover, the idea behind empowerment as an aspect of crime prevention is to attain powers through which the individual can strengthen his or her abilities to resist anti-social involvement or criminal activities in settings other than the sport setting. This understanding presupposes a concept of transferability since the empowered abilities are supposed to be used not only in sport but in broader society.

Empowering youth through sport to take on individual responsibility outside the sport setting is illustrated in the quotations below.

Sport also offers a very suitable medium for helping clients take responsibility: within the Summit programme the sports leader could gradually give the participants more responsibility for aspects of the activity. /.../ So sports-related contexts offer many opportunities to develop participants through a structured progression of taking greater responsibility. (31 p201)

The essence of SEPE [sport, exercise and physical education] work lies in liberating and empowering people /.../. This empowerment-oriented freedom has a dual character. It is freedom from terror, oppression and the ills of poverty; and it is freedom to choose, starting with what to do, play, and create. Both empowerment-oriented community development and sustainable development depend on this dual freedom, and it is integral to the social work of SEPE programs, practices, and policies. (57 p158)

Pro-social development is described in relation to the individual's self-image, to life skills and to that person attaining good physical and mental health. This aspect of social change is perhaps most obviously inseparable from the concept of individuality. The individual is the object of development in all these aspects. In this respect, pro-social development can scarcely be grasped without a concept of individuality. Additionally, the developmental proceedings are not primarily emphasised to be recognised as skills within the sport setting. The skills should rather be grasped

outside sport – more explicitly, in life. Although a better self-conception, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-control as well as reduced impulsivity and risk-taking are likely to enhance performances in sport, this is not the rationale in question. These skills presuppose a transfer from sport to other spheres in life, so the concept of transferability is vital.

It is claimed that pro-social skills and values attained by the individual in sport are transferred to other spheres of life, as illustrated below.

Given that moral behaviour is learned through social interaction, the ways in which relations with others are constructed and facilitated impacts the ethical and moral behaviour learned through sport. In other words, there is a level of transfer between the values and ethics promoted in the sport and the moral character instilled in children and youth who participate. (47 p27)

Life skills and sport skills have several similarities. First both are learned in the same way – through demonstration, modelling, and practice. Second, the skills learned in one domain are transferable to other domains /.../. Sport can provide a valuable vehicle for teaching life skills when these lessons are learned and transferred. (40 p53)

Educational practices that stress non-violence and moral values are highlighted in the literature review as a means of designing sport practices with crime-preventive aims. The educational practice presupposes a subject (subjected to education): it is the individual who presumably learns, is socialised and internalises values of non-violence and morality. From this point of view, educational practices are inseparable from the concept of individuality. Furthermore, the educational aims are not intended to enhance performances in the sport setting, but instead to encourage the individual to use his or her moral and non-violent capabilities to avoid anti-social involvement or criminal activities outside the sport setting. Here too, and in the same ways as with pro-social development, this presupposes a transfer from sport to other spheres in life. The concept of transferability is thus a prerequisite.

In the quotation below, the educational potential in sport to teach youth skills and values that can be used outside the sport setting is highlighted.

While participation in sport will not curb all violence and deviant behaviour, it is a highly effective tool for teaching...

...youth skills and values, helping children develop a positive sense of self, and providing a health-promoting alternative for youth who have nothing else to do. (63 p39)

The four aspects of the dominant mode of prevention (social change) all presuppose and are structured around the concepts of individuality and transferability. It is therefore relevant to speak of discourses on individuality and transferability. The concepts can be viewed as central signs in a structure of meaning, constructing the idea of sport as a means of crime prevention through aspects of social change. These structures are discourses that bring order to a disparate body of knowledge. Without the underlying discourses on individuality and transferability, the idea presented – of sport as a means of crime prevention – could not be fixed.

The discourses on individuality and transferability

As descriptions in the research literature suggest, since sport can contribute in promoting social change, it is important to grasp the locus of this change. If there are circumstances that apply in the prevention of crime that change through the use of sport, something needs to characterise this change. What changes? Social change in this context targets the individual. Granted, it is possible to argue that this does not exclude societal or structural change, since society is assumed to be constituted by individuals. This could possibly be accepted because sport can change society and structures through the change in and socialisation of individuals – that is certainly a relevant position. The research, however, clearly shows that knowledge is not constructed the other way around: sport is not described as a means of changing structures in society and by extension affecting the individual. As a method of intervention, sport is described on the individual level. In the descriptive analysis, in the criticism of viewing sport as a means of crime prevention, it was maintained that this view obscures non-individualistic explanations of social problems. This also illustrates how non-individualistic perspectives are distinguished from the prevailing emphasis on the individual. In addition, descriptions not embracing the social change-mode (but rather the averting-mode) such as diversion and deterrence also become meaningful through the discourse on individuality (although these themes do not condition the discourse on transferability).

The discourse on transferability is furthermore considered an inevitable complement to the discourse on individuality in enabling social change (in terms of sport, as a means of crime prevention). Perspectives in research emphasising sport for social (or rather individual) change presuppose the

idea that skills and values can be transferred from one sphere of society to another. Still, this idea presupposes three things: first, that skills and values acquired in sport are not very different from those in broader society; second, that they are cherished and desired in broader society; and third, that they can support a non-criminal lifestyle – when this is considered to be an effective means of crime prevention. This transference is explicitly called into question in the literature yet still constitutes a key rationale. The notion of transferability is quite explicit in claims that skills and values acquired in sport can be thought of as life skills, and that participants in sport learn to play the game of life. Accordingly, it is not possible to understand sport as a means of crime prevention through social change without the discourse on transferability.

The idea of sport as a means of crime prevention raises two further reflections. First, the discussion on individuality suggests that sport can be conceptualised as a means for individual ends. This has been met with criticism emphasising that an individualistic approach obscures structural explanations of social problems. In this respect, it could be argued that sport offers individual solutions to social problems. Whether or not this would be a true or fair statement is of less interest in this discussion. It is, however, a relevant discussion in general how this perspective sets the framework for the construction of crime as a social problem. In a society that emphasises solutions on the individual level, it would be relevant to question whether this does not contribute to the individualisation of social problems in general, hence framing them as individual problems requiring individual solutions. Second, the concept of and discourse on transferability could easily be further discussed and evaluated. The reviewed literature suggests that skills and values are not easily transferred to other spheres. Furthermore, the idea of transferability presupposes a certain mechanistic conception of instruction and communication, which could be questioned from other standpoints.

Conclusion

The findings in this article proceed from the aim of exploring the idea of sport as a means of crime prevention and its underlying assumptions by reviewing the scientific literature on this subject. Such implicit assumptions have been made explicit by exploring what research focuses on and how the descriptions are articulated. Although there is a heavy emphasis in the literature on researchers criticising the notion that sport can contribute in substantial ways to

preventing crime and delinquency, there are nonetheless ways in which sport is described and promoted as a means of crime prevention.

First, it was concluded from the descriptive analysis that the research is focused on three categories of empirical questions. Findings from this content analysis are succinctly summarised in an earlier section. From the categories developed, the content has been further analysed in the discussion section.

Second, the discussion concluded that the idea of sport as a means of crime prevention through aspects of social change such as personal and social relations, empowerment, pro-social development and education is supported by the discourses on individuality and transferability. These two key discourses construct a meaningful understanding of sport as a means of crime prevention. Additionally, the discussion has brought to the fore potential implications of individuality for our conceptions of crime as a social problem and potential empirical questions about the transfer of skills and values from one sphere in society to another.

The description has categorised and presented the articulated premises inherent in the research literature reviewed. However, the discussion has brought to the fore the implicit assumptions and discourses that are not visible yet are ever present in the literature reviewed. Accordingly, the discussion contributes to analytical achievements that push the gains from this article beyond descriptions in the literature by clarifying these, and making them explicit.

The central discussion suggests that the knowledge about sport as a means of crime prevention in the literature reviewed is dominated by the social change-mode and is further articulated through discourses on individuality and transferability. An examination is still needed of how these discourses are intertwined, what assumptions about the individual and society they are built upon and what ideological perspectives of sport or public policy these discourses are expressions of. Since questions like these are important for our understanding of sport and society, regarding our conceptions of sport both as sport and in society (or as a means of social objectives in society), they would be a strong aim in further research. Other aspects of the relation between sport and crime apart from the focus on sport as a means of crime prevention have been downplayed in this review. Moreover, a systematic review of the literature on sport as a generator of crime should lead to a more nuanced understanding of the relation between sport and crime. It is also worth noting once again that the

literature reviewed is not at all unanimous in viewing sport as an efficient or suitable means of crime prevention. This article concludes that social change by changing individuals and discourses on individuality and transferability are clearly prominent ingredients in current research that supports sport as a means of crime prevention. By considering these aspects, the bulk of scientific knowledge promoting sport as a means of crime prevention is constructed.

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Original Research

Discourses at work in media reports on Right To Play's "Promoting Life-Skills in Aboriginal Youth" programme

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Abstract

The Promoting Life-Skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) program, developed by Right To Play, in partnership with First Nations communities and with the support of the Government of Ontario, has been used as an attempt to foster life-skills development in First Nations youth. In this study, we employ critical discourse analysis to investigate the way that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media sources produce understandings of PLAY. Our results indicate that there is a sharp divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sources. Non-Aboriginal sources reinforced two deficit-based discourses about First Nations involved in the program: i) there is no hope for First Nations youth and they are thus prone to suicide and poor health, ii) and the Government of Ontario and Right To Play are responsible for the development of and financial contributions to PLAY. Conversely, Aboriginal media sources promoted two strength-based discourses concerning First Nations people: i) First Nations youth have hope, and ii) First Nations people play an integral role in the development of and financial contributions to PLAY. The findings suggest that non-Aboriginal media continues to reproduce colonial discourses concerning Aboriginal peoples while Aboriginal media actively challenges these discourses.

Introduction

In recent years, the number of international organizations turning to sport as a potential tool to tackle a variety of social issues has led to attention from both the United Nations (UN) and a growing number of non-governmental

organizations (NGOs) (1,2). Sport for development (SFD), also known as sport for development and peace (SDP), is a broad term that encompasses programs that use sport in attempts to foster individual and community development by confronting a variety of social, health, and cultural issues (2,3). SFD has gained considerable momentum and attention in recent years, despite concerns from authors such as Donnelly(4) who argue that Eurocentric sport promotes social exclusion and dominance and may not be the best tool for development initiatives. Nevertheless, during his 2006 address at the World Economic Forum, Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General from 1997-2006, hailed sport as a "global language capable of bridging social, cultural and religious divides. It can be a powerful tool for fostering understanding, tolerance and peace" (4)(p382). On November 3, 2003, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 58/5 titled Sport as a Means to Promote Education, Health, Development and Peace after a UN interagency task force determined that organized sports initiatives were cost effective tools with the potential to promote development and peace and to help the UN achieve its eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (5). Resolution 58/5 led to the UN declaring 2005 the "International Year of Sport and Physical Education," which formally recognized sport as an agent to achieve the MDGs and promoted SFD programs aimed at fostering development in marginalized communities around the globe (3). SFD programs have flourished in the wake of the UN's support and hundreds of programs are now running internationally, varying from small community-based sports initiatives to international corporate-sponsored programs (2,6).

Keywords: Aboriginal; First Nations; promoting life skills in Aboriginal youth; Right To Play; sport for development; media

Right To Play, a corporate-sponsored international SFD organization, has grown exponentially since its inception in 2000 when it transitioned from an Olympic fundraising program (Olympic Aid) to an NGO focused on promoting the potential benefits of sport to youth internationally (7). Right To Play programs are designed to target the needs of marginalized or Third World communities across the globe including Cote d'Ivoire, Rwanda, and Angola (7). Since Aboriginal peoples are the most marginalized peoples in Canada (8), and according to the UN, Aboriginal peoples in Canada presently live in Third World conditions, (9) Right To Play, in partnership with First Nations peoples and with support from the Government of Ontario, developed the Promoting Life Skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) program. PLAY uses sport and recreation to attempt to improve the health and well being of northern Ontario's First Nations youth (10). PLAY is partly self-funded by the recipient First Nations communities, while additional financing is provided by the Government of Ontario and private sponsors.

In this study, we use postcolonial theory and critical discourse analysis to investigate the ways in which non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal media sources report on PLAY. We evaluated 26 online news articles, 19 from non-Aboriginal sources and 7 from Aboriginal sources, and identified the dominant discourses at work in the articles. We then analyzed the way that articles reinforced or challenged racist views of First Nations people. In this paper, we employ the term racist to describe beliefs about and the treatment of First Nations people as "lesser than" non-First Nations Canadians. Through our literature review we show that many colonial policies and resulting actions concerning First Nations peoples were racist in nature and we demonstrate how some of these views continue to permeate non-Aboriginal media in Canada today. Our results support our literature review and indicate that there is a sharp divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media sources. Non-Aboriginal sources (re)produced two deficit-based discourses about First Nations involved in the program: i) there is no hope for First Nations youth and they are thus prone to suicide and poor health, and ii) the Government of Ontario and Right To Play are responsible for the development of and financial contributions to PLAY. Conversely, Aboriginal media sources promoted two strength-based discourses concerning First Nations people: i) First Nations youth have hope and ii) First Nations people play an integral role in the development and financial support of PLAY. The findings suggest that non-Aboriginal media continues to reproduce colonial discourses concerning Aboriginal peoples while Aboriginal media

challenge these discourses.

Literature Review

Though often portrayed as a recent innovation, sport for development has a long history in Aboriginal communities in Canada (11). In this section, we review the historical foundations of sport for development in Aboriginal communities, outline justifications for its use, contemporary approaches to sport for development, and media portrayals of Aboriginal peoples.

Historical Foundations

Despite the purported benefits of sport in Canada, researchers such as Paraschak (12) and Forsyth (13) have documented the extent to which sport has been used to control, suppress, and assimilate Aboriginal populations. The Indian Act (1867) afforded the Government of Canada the power to control First Nations peoples' ways of life (14), including participation in sport. Government officials dictated who could participate in sport, what sports could be played, and the level of competition available to First Nations teams and individuals (13).

Indeed, the Government of Canada has a long history of using sport initiatives to influence First Nations communities, seldom to the benefit of the recipient community. Paraschak (15) argued, "although few articles identify sport as a racist institution, the historical record supports this contention implicitly" (p60). Following the Indian Act of 1876 (14), First Nations populations were forced onto reserves and into residential schools that used Euro-Canadian sport as a means of oppression and control (13). Donnelly (4) explained that competitive Eurocentric sports are based on principles of social exclusion, dominance, and aggression, and reinforce concepts of patriarchy and capitalism. At the time of colonization, imperial powers, and later the Government of Canada, deemed Euro-Canadian social values to be civilized and necessary for First Nations people to acquire in order to integrate successfully within Canadian culture (14); thus, First Nations peoples were exposed to Eurocentric sports and inundated with Euro-Canadian social values on their reserves and in residential schools. According to Forsyth (13), First Nations peoples were encouraged to engage in Euro-Canadian sports to fill the void left when traditional physical and cultural practices were banned by government legislation.

The residential school system was one of the Government of Canada's most aggressive attempts to "civilize" First

Nations peoples (13). First Nations youth were removed from their communities and forced to attend the Christianized schools where First Nations cultural practices were banned and youth were obliged to adhere to Euro-Canadian values and ways of life (13). Sport was used to bring about fundamental changes in the values and behaviours of the First Nations students, most notably to break down communal values and foster an individual competitive spirit (8,13,16).

Aboriginal Health

Sport for development initiatives are often premised on the need to improve Aboriginal peoples' poor health. It is well-accepted that regular physical activity can contribute to the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle and decrease the incidence of preventable diseases such as coronary heart disease, type II diabetes, obesity, and hypertension (17). SFD programs often target youth populations because physical activity during their adolescence may improve adult health status by creating positive attitudes towards physical activity and contributing to maintaining an active lifestyle into adulthood (17). Beyond the physical health benefits, internationally, SFD programs have reportedly capitalized on the power of sport to foster individual and community development by attempting to improve the physical, emotional, economic, cultural, and social health of programs' recipients (5,7). The focus on the use of sport for development to achieve good health in First Nations communities in Canada may be, however, somewhat limited, as it fails to acknowledge the chronic underfunding of health care, education, and housing in First Nations communities as well as the long-term damage that colonial systems have and continue to bring about (18).

Contemporary Sport for Development in Aboriginal Communities

Since 2010, the Government of Canada has reportedly looked to the power of sport through structured SFD programs to assist in the development of Aboriginal communities in Canada (10). The Government of Canada recognizes that Aboriginal people are the most marginalized people in Canada (8) and that they experience major health disparities when compared to non-Aboriginal Canadians (8,19,20). The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) (20) stated that First Nations and Métis people have higher incidences of type II and gestational diabetes than non-Aboriginal peoples. Furthermore, Aboriginal individuals are generally diagnosed with diabetes at a younger age than non-Aboriginal populations (20). Compared to non-

Aboriginal populations, First Nations and Inuit peoples also have higher incidence of acute myocardial infarction, stroke, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, infant mortality, suicide and unintentional injuries resulting in death (19). There are also socio-cultural and economic disparities between Aboriginal populations and the rest of Canada including increased prevalence of family violence and substance abuse, increased time spent incarcerated, decreased employment and education rates, and dilapidated living conditions (8). Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health discrepancies in Canada have been linked to colonialism, dispossession of land, loss of traditional health practices, discrimination, food insecurity, lack of adequate housing, and unequal education systems and access to health care (18,21). Sport for development is used as a means to try to address the health inequities that result from these issues.

While sport may offer a means to improve Aboriginal peoples' physical health, sport initiatives need to be culturally sensitive and reflect Aboriginal cultural practices and values rather than those of Euro-Canadian origin (22-24). Drawing on existing literature, Sport Canada (25) explained that sport focused on holistic well-being and survival techniques have historically played a significant role in the lives of Aboriginal youth by reinforcing Aboriginal cultural and social teachings and connecting youth to their family and community; holistic sport "strengthens emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of Aboriginal life"(p4). Sport Canada (25) highlighted the need to integrate sports centred on appropriate cultural principles that parallel community beliefs and value systems into the lives of Aboriginal youth. Culturally appropriate sport can teach youth to balance mental, physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual aspects of Aboriginal life and will also aid in the maintenance of holistic health (25). It is, however, important that cultural aspects of sport not be limited to static interpretations of culture. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (8) warned that Aboriginal people are not prisoners of the past; instead, they borrow ideas and adapt cultural traits in ways that they find appealing, similar to other cultures in Canada. Giles (22) further explained that "tradition" and "traditional games" in Aboriginal communities in Canada should be viewed as constantly changing: sport and physical activity should reflect the fluidity of culture and adapt to changing cultural ideals. SFD initiatives, such as PLAY, are developed in collaboration with First Nations people to ensure that sport programs are culturally sensitive and meet the specific needs of First Nations youth.

In June 2010, Right To Play partnered with the Government of Ontario and two Northern Ontario First Nations communities, Sandy Lake and Moose Cree, to initiate PLAY. PLAY was designed as a culturally sensitive SFD initiative that targets the specific needs of First Nations community youth. PLAY purports to use sport and play as a means to foster individual and community development (10). The program encourages the holistic development of Aboriginal youth using the Experience-Reflect-Connect-Apply approach that engages youth in conversation about the sports they play, the lessons learned through sport, and helps youth connect sports lessons to real-life situations (10). The PLAY program aims to be inclusive and respect the rights of First Nations youth and their cultures by involving community leaders, elders, parents and youth in the design and implementation process of the program to ensure that each component is tailored specifically to the needs of the community (10).

SFD programs such as PLAY demonstrate the potential for provincial governments to partner with First Nations communities to implement SFD programs aimed at improving the health of First Nations youth. Notably, it is the Government of Ontario and not the federal government that is funding PLAY, even though Aboriginal peoples are a federal responsibility. Hawkes (26) likened the confusion between provincial and federal responsibility for Aboriginal people to “the most appalling ‘political football’” (p374), explaining that the lines of responsibility are blurring and provincial governments are becoming more responsible for Aboriginal affairs. Hayhurst and Giles (in press) argued that this change may reflect the current conservative government’s neo-liberal mandate and the continued retreat of the welfare state. (11) While the federal government continues to fund some Aboriginal sports programs such as Motivate Canada and the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity’s (CAAWS) Team Spirit program, provincial governments across Canada have taken increased funding responsibility for Aboriginal SFD programs including the Aboriginal Youth Sport Legacy Fund in British Columbia, Alberta’s Future Leaders Program in Alberta, the Aboriginal Sport Development initiative in Saskatchewan and PLAY in Ontario.

Although the UN and various NGOs support the use of sport in development initiatives internationally, authors such as Donnelly (4) have warned of the potential confusion of using sport to foster development. Competitive sport is often based on principals of social exclusion, ideological conformation, nationalism, militarism, and discriminatory

attitudes toward gender and disability (4,27). Darnell (27) stressed the paradox inherent in sport: sport is used to improve social skills and promote development, but can foster dominance and antisocial behaviour in participants. Donnelly (4) also argued that SFD programs may perpetuate underdevelopment and inequalities in marginalized communities by focusing on “modernizing” the community and “improving” conduct, rather than challenging the power relations that caused this marginalization. Harding (28) stated, “white Canadians have historically enjoyed and continue to hold decisive advantages over Aboriginal people in all forms of institutional power” (p205). These power relations have rendered Aboriginal peoples the most marginalized in Canada (3,8). By perpetuating assimilation processes that reinforce Eurocentric values and marginalize Aboriginal values, SFD programs that promote Euro-Canadian sport within First Nations communities may be contributing to further racism instead of challenging power relations (4,27). Although Right To Play designed PLAY as a culturally sensitive SFD program (10), media reporting on PLAY may still be reinforcing racist, colonial discourses concerning First Nations people in Canada. Since media plays an integral role in constructing our social realities (29), negative discourses presented in mainstream media may contribute to perpetuating racism and promoting colonial views of First Nations people.

Aboriginal Peoples and the Media

Harding (28) contended that racist, colonial attitudes and discourses about Aboriginal peoples continue to be present in mainstream media. Harding (28) explained that the active racism that appeared in the news in colonial times has been replaced by a passive “ethnocentrism characterized by a creed of ‘identical treatment,’ which emphasizes equality of opportunity and cultural pluralism while denying the existence of contemporary racist practices, attitudes and outcomes” (p206). Today, Aboriginal peoples are included in mainstream media reports, but Knopf (30) explained that contemporary media attention given to Aboriginal peoples often references poor living conditions and poor health without discussing the colonial history that led to these conditions. This sustains stereotypes “of the lazy Indians on welfare and the Indians as victims to be blamed for their state” (30)(p91).

Portrayals of Aboriginal athletes can fall into this trope. Tom Longboat was an exceptional runner who dominated the international professional running scene in the decades before World War I. He also maintained ties to his home reserve and culture throughout his career and into his

retirement (2). He broke countless records during his professional career while struggling to overcome racism, skepticism, and media slander at the hands of the Canadian public and his own manager (2).

According to Paraschak (15), research into the history of Aboriginal involvement in sports in Canada demonstrates that Aboriginal athletes suffered from the distortion of their sport experiences due to the “ethnic chauvinism of the chronicler” (p58). Longboat’s career was no exception as the media used reports on Longboat to reinforce negative discourses about Aboriginal peoples, namely that all Aboriginal people were inferior to white men, impulsive, prone to drunkenness and lazy (2).

Certainly, mass media play an integral role in constructing our social realities (29); thus, deficit-based discourses concerning Aboriginal people that are reinforced in the media have the power to negatively influence the general public’s understanding of Aboriginal people. As such, Aboriginal peoples in Canada have created their own media sources and have taken the responsibility of representing their culture in the media into their own hands (30). Yet, it must be recognized that even Aboriginal media in Canada today are not free from the effects of colonization with Aboriginal media often producing content infused with both Indigenous and Western values and philosophies (30).

Our research addresses the question of how media reports on PLAY reinforce or challenge racist, colonial discourses concerning First Nations people. In short, we examine the varying roles that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media sources play in reproducing or challenging these discourses.

Theoretical Framework: Postcolonialism

In general, postcolonial theory is used to understand colonialism’s ongoing impacts after independence from colonial powers (31). Postcolonial perspectives examine the impact of colonial practices on the construction of power relations that privilege the dominant race, class, or gender while rendering the dominated invisible (32). Since imperial Britain and France colonized Aboriginal peoples’ lands, the Aboriginal ways of life and cultural practices have been oppressed (13,14). Throughout the colonization process and in the years that followed, damaging Eurocentric discourses intertwined with formal legislature like the Indian Act of 1876 left Aboriginal communities isolated and oppressed by dominant Euro-Canadian culture.

The strength of postcolonial theory is that it allows for the

examination of the power relations and colonial values that render Aboriginal peoples invisible and allow for continued oppression by the dominant, non-Aboriginal, Canadian society. Postcolonial theory allows for the subjugated knowledge of the dominated group to challenge the notions of inferiority (3), potentially “disrupt[ing] the colonialist mainstream discourses” (33)(p13).

According to Hayhurst (32), “sport has been inextricably linked to colonialism” (p24). Despite Canada’s 2010 (late) affirmation of support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (34), which states, “indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health... and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions” (35), there remains a trend of unequal power distribution regarding Aboriginal SFD initiatives in Canada. Aboriginal peoples have limited input into SFD policy, despite the fact that they are often the intended recipients of such programs (3). Sports programs of the past were often oppressive for Aboriginal peoples because they were often developed and implemented by non-Aboriginal Canada with the intention of developing and civilizing First Nations people (36). Discourses today still promote a need for non-Aboriginal (dominant) cultures to develop SFD programs for marginalized Aboriginal communities (11).

In Canada, it remains all too clear that the damaging effects of colonization persist, particularly in relation to the treatment of Aboriginal peoples. The Indian Act (1867) today continues to dictate First Nations’ use of land and resources, outline First Nations’ government and education structures, and make First Nations peoples and their lands “a subject for government regulation, like mines or roads” (8)(p14). First Nations peoples have been subjected to uneven power relations with Euro-Canadian people since the start of colonization; thus, analysis of SFD initiatives that target First Nations populations in Canada must consider the history of colonization and the colonial constructs that have reinforced and legitimized these power relations and continue to maintain such relations today. To analyze these relations of power, we turn to discourse analysis.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse can be defined as ideas and knowledge, interrelated to texts, which are used to define the social realities that legitimize power advantages for some and disadvantage others (1,37,38). Following the work of

Michel Foucault, discourse analysis has come to reflect “a theoretical skepticism” (1)(p564) of social “truths” that enable uneven exercises of power. Discourse analysts explore how socially produced ideas were created in the first place and how these social truths, which are bounded up in the dynamics of power, reinforce themselves over time (37). It is within discourse that power relations are reinforced or challenged (3).

In this study, we engage with critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the role that media play in sustaining or challenging unequal power relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations in Canada. Harding (28) argued that CDA is “particularly well suited to studying the treatment of people of colour and other minority populations in the press” (p207) because of its ability to analyze subtle manipulations and variations in meanings that reproduce or challenge dominant discourses (29). According to Phillips and Hardy (37), language is constructive, constitutive, and social. Language enacts identity, has power, is active, and is political (38). Essentially, language is used to mean something and do something, and both of these are linked to the socio-political, cultural, and historical context of use (38). Thus, CDA is employed to examine the role that the media’s use of language plays in constructing social meanings (37,38), particularly how this language defines what it means to be a First Nations individual in Canada and the power relations carried over from colonialism associated with this constructed identity. Discourses reinforcing the necessity of

SFD programs to “fix” First Nations communities reflect relations of power that legitimize and privilege Euro-Canadian sport and their inherent ideologies over those of the First Nations people.

In this study, we focused on Canadian media that reported on Right To Play’s PLAY program from 2009 to 2012. We examined news reports including online newspapers, online news forums, and online magazines from local, provincial, and national Canadian news sources, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal in origin. We also included official press releases from government organizations and Right To Play. We reviewed 26 articles in total: seven from Aboriginal news sources and 19 from non-Aboriginal sources. The articles are outlined in Tables 1 and 2. The imbalance between the numbers of articles in each category reflects the much larger numbers of non-Aboriginal media sources in Canada. Articles were retrieved from Internet search engines and the Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies database accessed from the University of Ottawa library’s website. Example search terms included “Right To Play PLAY program”, “PLAY”, “Promoting Life-Skills in Aboriginal Youth”, “PLAY Sandy Lake and Moose Cree”, “First Nations sport Ontario”, and “Right To Play in northern Ontario”. We identified thirty articles in our preliminary search, after which we eliminated four articles; two articles were identical to those from other news sources and two articles did not specifically discuss the PLAY program.

Table 1: Non-Aboriginal News Sources

Source	Type	Readership	Target Audience	# of Articles
The Toronto Star	News Article	3.1 million	Toronto, Ontario	7
The Globe and Mail	News Article	3.5 million	Canada	1
The Argus	News Article	3 000	Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario	1
Timmins Press	News Article	7 000	Timmins, Ontario	1
Ontario News North	News Article	50 000	Northern Ontario	1
Government of Ontario	Press Release	*	Ontario	2
Sport Research Intelligence Sportive	Press Release	3.5 million	Canada	1
Right to Play	Press Release	*	Canada	1
NetNewsLedge	News Article	50-100 000	Northwestern Ontario	1
CNW	Press Release	*	Canada	2
CBC Sports	News Article	2 million	Canada	1

* Readership not available

Table 2: Aboriginal News Sources

Source	Type	Readership	Target Audience	# of Articles
Active Circle	News Forum	*	Canada	2
Turtle Island - Native Network's Forum	News Forum	20 000	Northern Ontario	1
Wawatay	News Article	23 000	NAN - Northern Ontario	1
Native Journal	Journal Article	70 000	Canada	1
Windspeaker	News Article	140 000	Canada	1
Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians		20 000	AIAI communities in Ontario	1

* Readership not available

We then used CDA to analyze the articles by identifying discourses regarding First Nations people, especially how these discourses constructed First Nations people in Canada, and the way in which the language of each article was used to reinforce or challenge the dominant discourses about First Nations peoples. According to Willig (39), the first step of CDA involves identifying the ways in which a discourse is constructed within a particular text – in our case, the articles. In order to identify discursive constructions, Fairclough (40) suggests an approach that focuses on a problem, such as the ways in which First Nations peoples are represented in text.. Because discourses and their meanings are generated by the relationships between words, focusing only on a search for particular words will not yield a strong understanding of the discourses at work. As a result, Willig (39) suggested examining both implicit and explicit meanings in segments of text, as well as what is and is not being said in relation to the discursive object's construction. In the next stage of discourse analysis, one examines the broader discursive contexts in which discursive constructions are embedded. In this case, the context is the larger socio-politico-historico situation in which Aboriginal-settler relations and associated relations of power are embedded. It is of key importance to examine power and issues of dominance, since social life and social realities are produced by text and talk (40). In the final stage of discourse analysis, one identifies the impact(s) that discourses have on individuals and the ways in which these individuals reproduce or challenge these discourses.

Both authors completed the identification of discourses and then categorized the discourses into two broader categories. Four prominent discourses arose from the analysis; all discourses are presented in the results. Finally, we compared the difference in language and discourses between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sources and examined how the language of the collective articles in each category

legitimized or challenged dominant relations of power between First Nations and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Results

The results of this study indicate a divide between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal news sources. Non-Aboriginal sources reinforced two deficit-based discourses regarding Aboriginal peoples: i) there is no hope for First Nations youth in their current communities and First Nations youth are thus prone to suicide and poor health, and ii) the Government of Ontario and Right To Play developed PLAY to save First Nations youth, without contribution – either conceptually or financially from the First Nations communities themselves. Aboriginal sources, on the other hand, challenged these dominant discourses by promoting two alternative, strength-based discourses: i) First Nations youth have hope, and ii) First Nations people play vital roles in both conceptual and financial contributions to PLAY's development.

Non-Aboriginal Sources

First Nations youth have no hope and are thus prone to suicide. A dominant discourse that arose in non-Aboriginal news sources was that First Nations peoples, particularly First Nations youth, have no hope for social wellness or self-improvement in their current communities, and that PLAY is necessary to give youth hope. Twenty-three of the 35 statements made in the non-Aboriginal sources that alluded to this discourse occurred in the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail. A sample headline from the Toronto Star read, "Forgotten kids get a chance to play: Humanitarian group set to bring the spirit of the game to two tiny, isolated communities" (41). Similarly, MacLeod's (42) article in the Globe and Mail stated that PLAY would

give First Nations youth “hope that there could be a future,” but made no mention of current efforts by First Nations peoples to address the needs of their own youth. Articles by Romain (43), Simko (44) and NewsNetLedger (45) did use language such as “build on,” “improve,” or “helps” to imply that the First Nations youth were already on a positive developmental path prior to PLAY implementation, but the discourse that dominated all non-Aboriginal sources was that First Nations youth are hopeless without PLAY.

Non-Aboriginal news sources reported that PLAY was a necessary intervention for First Nations youth to counter the high suicide rates and poor health conditions in First Nations communities. One Toronto Star headline read, “Right To Play takes hockey north; Group, province offer program for community plagued by teen suicides” (46). In a later Toronto Star article on PLAY, Starkman (41) stated that there were “13 teen suicides in the isolated communities in the James Bay area in 2009. All the teens died by hanging. Another 80 tried to take their own lives.” MacLeod’s (42) Globe and Mail report, as well as reports from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (47), the Timmins Press (43), and Ontario News North (48), also highlighted the high rates of suicide and violence in their reporting on PLAY and stated that more than half of all First Nations youth were in poor health and were either obese, overweight, or struggling with type II diabetes.

Non-Aboriginal people save First Nations youth without First Nations’ contributions. Another deficit-based discourse that dominated non-Aboriginal sources was that the Government of Ontario and Right To Play designed PLAY as an intervention to save First Nations youth with little input from the community members themselves. Many of the articles focused on the “McGuinty [then Premier of Ontario] government’s plan” (47) or stated that PLAY was designed by non-Aboriginal peoples and organizations, giving First Nations people no credit for their role in PLAY. In her Toronto Star article, Talaga (49) credited the entire creation of PLAY to Brad Duguid, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs from 2008-2010. She stated that it was his “dream of teaching northern First Nations kids how to skate and play Canada’s game” (49) that led to the eventual implementation of PLAY in northern Ontario, again ignoring any influence and self-actualisation from First Nations people themselves. Throughout the non-Aboriginal sources, the Government of Ontario and Right To Play were the main partners credited with the creation of PLAY with no mention of First Nations contributions. Only two non-Aboriginal sources gave credit to First Nations people for their role in PLAY’s design and implementation: Right To

Play (50) and Sport Research Intelligence Sportive (SRIS) (51). SRIS quoted national director Robert Witchel, who thanked the “First Nations communities with whom we work” (51) for the success of PLAY and Right To Play highlighted that PLAY was developed “in partnership with the Ontario government, First Nations communities and other organizations” (50).

Non-Aboriginal sources also highlighted only the financial contributions made to PLAY by the Government of Ontario, Right To Play, or other non-Aboriginal title sponsors such as the Royal Bank of Canada (50). The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) is the only First Nations partner mentioned in a non-Aboriginal article, but details of NAN’s role as a contributor, whether financial or not, are not highlighted (50). The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (52) press release stated that the Ontario Government had committed more than \$1.6 million dollars to the PLAY program over four years and private partners had contributed more than \$2 million, yet the article did not mention the contributions from First Nations communities or organizations. SRIS (51), Right To Play (50), the Ontario Newsroom (48), the Timmins Press (43) and the Toronto Star (46,53,54) also highlighted the more than \$1.6 million dollars invested by the Government of Ontario and associated partners, with no mention of any First Nations’ community or organization’s financial contribution.

Aboriginal Sources

First Nations youth have hope. Native Journal (55), a monthly national Aboriginal magazine, highlighted NAN Chief Stan Beardy’s perspective that, “First Nations are most disadvantaged when it comes to sports and recreation facilities and programs”. This indicated that PLAY was needed to expand current sports programs to give more youth access to sport, not that youth have no options or hope without the program. Aboriginal sources focused on how PLAY would “inspire and motivate youth to lead cultural and sporting events, build relationships with Elders and other community members, and plan activities to help address local social issues” (56), reinforcing the idea that First Nations youth were already setting goals, creating plans, and developing leadership, self-esteem, and confidence within their communities before PLAY.

First Nations people play an integral role in the development and financial support of PLAY. Aboriginal sources highlighted First Nations’ communities’ involvement in creating and implementing the PLAY program. Turtle Island (57), an independent Aboriginal

news and information network, emphasized that PLAY brought together the Government of Ontario, Right To Play and First Nations communities to “develop meaningful and sustainable programs to support healthy communities in Canada’s north” (57). Zayadin (58) and Native Journal (55) highlighted the role of the First Nations communities in the PLAY planning process and the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) (59) clarified that Right To Play worked directly with the Chiefs of Ontario to select successful community applicants.

Aboriginal sources also emphasized that First Nations communities that host PLAY are responsible for a fifty percent contribution to the salary of the Community Mentor along with providing office space and accommodations for the PLAY program coordinator whenever that person visits the community (59). Active Circle (56), an online Aboriginal initiative within Motivate Canada that posts news pertinent to Aboriginal peoples, also pointed out that “[a]lthough the Government and Right To Play Canada will provide some financial supports [to PLAY], there are additional costs to the First Nations community.”

Discussion

Based on our analysis, Aboriginal news sources focused on the strengths of communities and the positive relationships that are being built between the Government of Ontario, Right To Play, and First Nations communities through the implementation of PLAY in northern Ontario. Non-Aboriginal media sources, on the other hand, used deficit-based discourses of First Nations peoples, which in turn (re)produce colonial stereotypes and prejudices and perpetuate unequal power relations and social inequalities that continue to exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Strengths versus Weakness and the Politics of Selective Reporting

Harding (28) ascertained that “white Canadians have historically enjoyed, and continue to hold, decisive advantages over Aboriginal people in all forms of institutional power” (p205) and these power relations continue to be supported in the mass media (28,30). Promoting prevailing discourses such as First Nations youth have no hope and are prone to suicide and poor health preserves the long-standing notion that non-Aboriginal Canada needs to maintain control of First Nations populations (8,13) and that non-Aboriginal Canadians know what is best for First Nations people. Non-Aboriginal

sources failed to address the social and political histories that have led to these poor health and socio-economic conditions or to discuss how this history continues to shape power relations that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada today. According to Harding (28),

“While devoting considerable attention to reporting on the extreme circumstances in which many contemporary aboriginal people live – poverty, alcoholism, crime, and suicide – news media simultaneously eschew any analysis of the socio-political context of these living conditions and the impact of Canada’s long history of colonialism on aboriginal people (p206).”

This selective reporting disengages the historical influence of colonialism from the current state of First Nations communities and results in victim blaming, suggesting that First Nations people are at fault for their own poor health and are doing little to nothing to help their own youth.

Aboriginal sources actively challenged the dominant relations of power promoted in non-Aboriginal media sources by focusing on the strengths already held by First Nations youth and communities before the advent of PLAY. Aboriginal media promoted the discourse that First Nations youth were already hopeful and used language such as “build on” and “improve” to construct an image of First Nations youth who are strong, motivated, goal-oriented, and who intended to use PLAY to build on already present life-skills. Aboriginal sources did not focus on community deficits: the articles did not mention suicide or poor health in the PLAY recipient communities. Instead, articles from Aboriginal sources built an image of strong communities excited by the potential of the PLAY program, and specifically outlined PLAY’s role as improving sport infrastructure and making sport available to more youth in target communities.

Interestingly, Harding (28) argued that mainstream media today uses a more passive form of racism than previously seen in Canadian media, which can be observed through the use of Aboriginal voices in non-Aboriginal media sources. Non-Aboriginal media quote Aboriginal experts’ concerns about the health of First Nations people to legitimize deficit-based reporting. For example, NAN Chief Stan Beardy was quoted extensively in non-Aboriginal media sources, often to reinforce the poor state of health of First Nations youth. These quotes reinforced stereotypical representations of First Nations peoples and normalized racism toward First Nations peoples by other Canadians. Alternatively, Conrad

(60) argued that expert quotes may be used by media to provide context, implications, legitimation, explication, and/or balance: the use of experts' quotes to legitimize the concerns of First Nations people could be a strategic way for Aboriginal sources to garner much needed resources for First Nations people and programs. For example, *Native Journal* (55) quoted Chief Beardy saying, "NAN First Nations are most disadvantaged when it comes to sports and recreation facilities and programs." This quote draws attention to the chronic government underfunding that has disadvantaged Canada's First Nations communities (8) and sports programs. Active Circle (56) also used quotes from Grand Chief Randall Phillips to ask for funding from "corporations and business leaders" to support PLAY, explaining that the program will require funding beyond what is available from Right To Play and the Government of Ontario in order to make PLAY accessible to all First Nations youth in Ontario. Expert quotes may assist Aboriginal sources in drawing attention to the economic disparities occurring in today's disadvantaged First Nations communities as well as the lack of adequate funding from Canadian governments to rectify these issues.

Developing and Investing in Sport for Development Initiatives

The roles of First Nations people in PLAY's development were rendered invisible in non-Aboriginal media sources through the discourse that First Nations people did not contribute to PLAY. This discourse arose regardless of the fact that according to Right To Play (10), one of the main goals of the PLAY program is to respect the rights of First Nations youth and their culture by involving community members in all levels of program design and implementation. Right To Play (10) ascertained that First Nations community members must be actively involved in all levels of program design to ensure PLAY meets the specific needs of the community. Yet, non-Aboriginal media sources only credited First Nations people with the role of recipient. Nicholls and Giles (3) argued that a trend of unequal exercises of power and lack of Aboriginal input into SFD initiatives continues in Canada today. Non-Aboriginal media reinforced these power relations by rendering First Nations peoples invisible in any discussion about the development or implementation of PLAY.

Aboriginal sources, conversely, challenged the discourse that non-Aboriginal sources developed PLAY without input from First Nations people by promoting the fact that First Nations people not only contributed to program implementation, but also were integral partners in all levels

of PLAY's design. By actively promoting the role that First Nations people played in developing PLAY, Aboriginal media sources constructed First Nations people as motivated and willing participants in change, which reinforces strength-based views of First Nations people and challenges dominant deficit-based discourses.

Non-Aboriginal media further promoted discourse that First Nations peoples do not contribute financially to PLAY. This discourse produces First Nations people as financially dependent on non-Aboriginal Canada and unwilling to contribute financially to potentially beneficial youth programs. This legitimizes power relations that privilege non-Aboriginal Canada as superior to First Nations peoples and justifies the need for colonial legislation such as the Indian Act (1876) to govern the "deviant" (61) First Nations populations. This discourse effectively sanctions racism and oppression toward First Nations people by denying First Nations' desire to contribute financially to programs for their own peoples and by failing to discuss how government policies have contributed to the endemic poverty that forced First Nations people to be reliant on Canadian taxpayers (8). The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (8) concluded that First Nations people want to be free of dependence on non-Aboriginal Canada and free of the shame and debilitating effects of poverty associated with this dependence. The PLAY program can be promoted to non-Aboriginal Canada as an example of First Nations peoples' financial capabilities and as an example of the cooperation and success that is possible through partnerships between governments, NGOs, and First Nations people. Non-Aboriginal media instead focused on negative discourses and continue the colonial practice of rendering First Nations peoples' contributions to investing in their youth invisible.

Aboriginal news sources also challenged the deficit-based discourse concerning financial dependence that was reinforced in non-Aboriginal media by actively promoting the financial contributions that First Nations communities were making to PLAY: half of the salary of the Community Mentor, contribution of space for the programs to take place, and contribution of accommodation for Right To Play staff during community support visits (10). This reinforced notions of First Nations people as strong and committed to improving the lives of their youth. Aboriginal discourse also promoted how First Nations people were able to contribute financially to programs such as PLAY, suggesting that First Nations people are becoming more economically self-reliant. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (8) ascertained that increased self-reliance could contribute to

future economic independence and freedom for First Nations people.

In light of the apparent discrepancies between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sources' reporting on the PLAY program and the potentially damaging effects that deficit-based discourses can have on First Nations peoples in Canada, discourses used in mainstream media reporting on First Nations peoples need to be more balanced. A potential medium for this change may be through Right To Play and the PLAY program directly. While the PLAY program had clear goals and guidelines regarding First Nations communities' involvement in program design and funding, the Right To Play press release reviewed in this study made little mention of either of these facts (50). The press release recognized First Nations people as program partners, but the specific roles and contributions of First Nations people were not highlighted. Instead the press release focused on the contributions of the Ontario government and private sector partners. More conscious reporting by Right To Play may help better inform non-Aboriginal writers and audiences, challenging the existing beliefs that First Nations people need to be saved and do not contribute to programs like PLAY. Press releases from the PLAY program itself, written by youth or community members involved in the program and released by Right To Play for distribution to major Canadian news centres, may also be means of clearly communicating First Nations' involvement in the program and thus avoid future deficit-based reporting. There may be a need for Right To Play and other SFD programs in the future to employ a media strategy that is aimed at preventing deficit-based discourses. A future area of study may be an examination of how SFD programs could implement such a strategy and the potential benefit, if any, these strategies may have on increasing strengths-based reporting in non-Aboriginal media sources.

A limitation of this study was that we examined only online English sources, which thus excluded articles in French, Aboriginal languages, and print, television, and radio news sources. A further limitation of this study was that a large number of non-Aboriginal news articles came from the Toronto Star (seven of 19 articles) and Talaga wrote three of these. As a result, the findings of this study may reflect the biases of the Toronto Star and Talaga in particular. Nevertheless, the themes that arose in the Toronto Star articles permeated all other non-Aboriginal sources, which led us to believe that the discourses that were presented in the Star do reflect the views across a broad spectrum of non-Aboriginal Internet reporting.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that non-Aboriginal media sources continue to reproduce deficit-based discourses concerning First Nations people while Aboriginal media actively challenges these discourses. Right To Play developed PLAY in partnership with First Nations people and with the support of the Government of Ontario. One of the goals of the program was to ensure that the rights of the targeted First Nations youth were respected (10). To obtain this goal, Right To Play (10) aimed to include First Nations peoples in all levels of the program development and implementation, and required the target community to provide a substantial portion of the financing to maintain the program. Yet, non-Aboriginal media sources reporting on PLAY failed to mention the role of any First Nations person or community in the creation, implementation or financing of PLAY. Harding (28) and Knopf (30) argued that when media fail to acknowledge the contributions of First Nations people to programs such as PLAY, these reports act to reinforce colonial power relations that privilege organizations – in this case, the Government of Ontario and non-Aboriginal institutions such as Right To Play over First Nations people. These power relations enable non-Aboriginal Canada to intervene in First Nations communities and reinforce the deficit-based discourse that non-Aboriginal people must save First Nations youth. Non-Aboriginal media sources reinforced deficit-based discourses that stressed the laziness and inability of First Nations people to help themselves and that there is no hope for First Nations youth and First Nations youth are prone to suicide. Non-Aboriginal sources reported only on the deficits of First Nations communities, without mentioning the colonial history that has rendered First Nations people “the most marginalized group in Canadian society” (62)(pXV).

Aboriginal sources, on the other hand, used reports on PLAY to challenge the dominant, deficit-based discourses that permeated non-Aboriginal sources, by emphasizing the current strength of First Nations youth and communities and highlighting the role the Aboriginal peoples played in all levels of PLAY design and implementation. Aboriginal sources used strength-based approaches when reporting and promoted an image of First Nations people as strong, financially independent, and willing participants in change. Our research thus supports Knopf's (30) assertion that “Aboriginal people are taking the representation of their cultures into their own hands to counter the still prevalent stereotypes and misrepresentation floating in the main-stream mediascapes” (p115). Given the extent to

which non-Aboriginal media sources outnumber Aboriginal media sources, non-Aboriginal media must recognize the way that they are reporting on First Nations people and strive to ensure that they no longer reinforce deficit-based, colonial discourses.

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Original Research

Coaches' perspectives on sport-plus programmes for underserved youth: An exploratory study in South Africa

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Abstract

Increasing global awareness and a growing appreciation for sport for development programmes has led the post-apartheid South African government to use sport as a tool for empowering marginalized and impoverished communities. However, the sport for development programmes that have received the greatest governmental support and been evaluated by researchers have been “top-down” development projects, which have been criticised for a variety of reasons (e.g., not addressing actual community needs). This study was designed in response to this concern, with five focus groups conducted with 19 South African coaches. It was conducted in an effort to hear the voices of coaches operating at the ground level with sport for development programmes, leading to a better understanding of three key areas: (a) the realities of the sport setting, (b) the experiences of coaches and young people in these underserved communities, and (c) what approach to take when designing, implementing, and evaluating sport for development programmes. Practical implications for parents, coaches, and sport for development programme providers are also discussed, including the strategies used to keep children and youth involved in sport and coaches' recommendations for improvements in sport within underserved South African communities (e.g., joint top-down and inside-up programmes; specific improvements for coaching education programmes).

Background

Over the past few decades, there has been a growing

awareness and appreciation of sport as a means for international development^{1,2}, with sport being incorporated into the universal development strategies of worldwide donors and development agencies³ and scholars examining how sport could help achieve the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.⁴ The continent that has received the greatest attention for delivering on these goals by 2015 has been Africa, where many populations are subjected to poverty, gender inequity, high morbidity and mortality rates, and low levels of literacy.⁵ Given this attention, there have been an increasing number of sport for development (SfD) programmes in the continent.

Focusing on the country of South Africa, there has also been a distinct shift in the positioning of sport in the overarching societal and cultural norms. South Africa has one of the highest crime rates in the world,⁶ low life expectancies, and unemployment rates as high as 75% in some communities.⁷ Even though apartheid ended in 1994, there was, and still is, low social cohesion among the different racial groups, with higher rates of disease, crime, corruption, and social problems in makeshift settlements (“townships”) built during apartheid for black individuals that are still populated and largely segregated today.⁸ There are also many disadvantaged communities of coloured individuals in South Africa that are less “makeshift,” but still disadvantaged, with sub-standard housing and amenities. With these complex problems in mind, the government began to believe that sport could serve as a developmental tool for the individuals residing in these underserved communities, leading to stronger communities with healthier social, political, and economic environments.^{9,10}

Keywords: sport; development; South Africa; underserved children; underserved youth

At the national level, the South African government supported a series of initiatives under the Australia-South Africa Development Programme, which focused on sport participation and the development of sport skills for young South Africans.^{11,12} Additionally, there has been a call for mass participation programmes by Sport and Recreation South Africa, with a focus on building communities through active and structured participation in sport and recreation programmes.¹³ Each of these national initiatives have been evaluated by outsider researchers, with Burnett and colleagues finding evidence of social change in terms of empowerment, equity, and access to participation and decision-making opportunities, resulting in enhanced social capital at the individual and community level.^{11, 12,14}

Although these programmes are to be commended, along with the strong research conducted by Burnett and colleagues, they are “top-down” development projects designed, funded, and implemented by national and international governing bodies. The top-down approach is one of three developmental approaches identified by Mintzberg,¹⁵ along with the outside-in globalization approach and the inside-up indigenous approach. Over time, researchers have begun to question this top-down government planning approach, with multiple concerns: (a) the power and politics in the sport and development relationship;^{16,17} (b) whether community needs are even addressed by top-down programmes;¹⁸ (c) the possibility that top-down programmes can be used for social control and regulation;^{19,20} and (d) the potential that top-down programmes will not be welcome in the target communities.¹⁵ In relation to this last point, Burnett²¹ acknowledged that the School Sport Mass Participation Programme never achieved real buy-in from the communities, resulting in a backlash to this government-sponsored programme. These four concerns highlight the need to better understand inside-up approaches with widespread community involvement in the design, implementation, and evaluation of sport for development programmes.

Along with this call for more research focused on inside-up, grassroots programming throughout the world, there has also been a call for research methods addressing alternative knowledges or voices, with a strong concern that the majority of research efforts have focused on programmers from the “top” or the “outside” who are implementing these SfD programmes.²²⁻²⁴ There is also the concern that researchers have tried to evaluate SfD programmes using standard, quantitative evaluation methods, which may not be suitable for obtaining an in-depth understanding of these programmes and the individuals’ experiences on the

ground.²⁵ While this type of research is necessary, it is also critical for researchers to explore what Coakley^{26(p122)} described as the “variations in sport experiences and how people from different social and cultural backgrounds give those experiences meaning and integrate them into their lives at various points in their life course.” Coakley²⁷ elaborated on this concern in 2011 with an exploration of how global SfD organisations operating in underserved communities tend to prioritize developmental outcomes that are desired by the sponsoring organisations and their staff members. Coakley criticised this approach, instead recommending the promotion of developmental outcomes desired by the people being served, who are from different social and cultural backgrounds and may therefore value different forms of personal development. This highlights the need to give a voice to those individuals who are involved in local, inside-up programming efforts around the world.

This South African study was designed to hear the voices of coaches operating at the ground level, leading to a better understanding of three key areas: (a) the realities of the sport setting, (b) the experiences of coaches and young people in these underserved communities, and (c) what approach to take when designing, implementing, and evaluating SfD programmes. These objectives were achieved by conducting focus groups with sport coaches with considerable experience providing sport programming for children and youth in underserved communities in South Africa, predominantly in the Western Cape region. One of the strengths of this research was the fact that coaches from a variety of sport-plus programmes served as the research participants. Sport-plus programmes are predominantly focused on developing and sustaining sport organizations in order to meet sport-specific objectives, while also using sport to address larger social issues.²⁸ This addresses yet another limitation of past research studies,²⁹ which have been narrowly focused on individual SfD programmes or on particular SfD organisations, instead of examining a broad selection of programmes and organisations from one country. This research study was designed to take a broad focus, with coaches from many different sport-plus programmes participating in focus groups.

Methods

This study used a phenomenological methodology, with semi-structured focus groups enabling the participants’ perceptions and meanings to be collected and analyzed.³⁰ A constructivist ontology framed the study, with the understanding that different versions of reality are constructed by individuals, while an interpretivist

epistemology guided the research, with the belief that only indirect indications of the phenomena under study can be obtained.^{31,32}

Participants

Following ethical clearance from an American university and a South African university, five focus group interviews were conducted. Selected participants were required to be South African citizens who were at least 18 years old with the ability to speak and understand conversational English. Additionally, the participants had to have experience coaching underserved South African children and/or youth for a minimum of two years. Using these criteria for inclusion, the final sample consisted of 19 participants split into the five focus groups. See Table 1 for the sample characteristics.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Sample Characteristics	Participants
Number of subjects, N (%)	19 (100)
Age, y (mean +/- SD)	40.94 +/- 9.61
Race/Ethnicity, N (%)	
Black	6 (31.58)
Coloured	10 (52.63)
White	3 (15.79)
Native Language, N (%)	
Africans	13 (68.42)
Xhosa	6 (31.58)
Highest Education, N (%)	
Grade 10	1 (5.26)
Grade 12	1 (5.26)
University	4 (21.05)
Higher Education	7 (36.84)
National Diploma or Advanced Certificate	5 (26.32)
No response	1 (5.26)
Coaching Experience, y (mean +/- SD)	16.16 +/- 8.95
Sports Coached, N (%)	
Soccer	6
Netball	6
Rugby	5
Athletics	6
Cricket	3
Gymnastics	2
Field Hockey	2
Handball	2
Volleyball	1
Aerobics	1
Golf	1

Procedures

Greenbaum³³ has suggested that focus groups are appropriate when researchers are interested in generating new ideas from a variety of perspectives. Given the exploratory nature of the study, focus group interviews were chosen as the most appropriate data collection tool. The participants were recruited through a combination of snowball and purposive sampling techniques to ensure a representative sample. Specifically, a local South African university professor who understood the purpose of this study helped the interviewer make initial contact with some coaches and other individuals who may be able to recommend potential participants. In turn, these individuals provided the interviewer with additional coaches to contact. Each focus group was scheduled at the convenience of the participants, so that groups of coaches were able to assemble. Incentives were not offered as a means to recruit participants, with the coaches taking part in the study under their own volition. One of the authors conducted all of the focus group interviews following the suggestion by Krueger and Casey³⁴ that the same researcher serve as the moderator due to her involvement with the development of the interview guide, knowledge of the research topic, and ability to probe with follow-up questions. Prior to the start of each focus group, the participants were informed of the purposes of the study, the confidentiality of their comments, and their rights as research participants. They then signed an informed consent form and completed a basic demographics questionnaire.

Interview Guide

In line with the guidelines set by Kvale,³⁵ a semi-structured format was used for the focus groups. There was a specific set of questions that were posed in all of the focus groups, but the interviewer was free to explore any unexpected issues and topics that arose in each focus group. The interview guide was developed from a combination of factors, including previous literature on coaching,^{36,37} positive youth development,^{38,39} and life skills development.⁴⁰⁻⁴² Additionally, a review of focus group literature was used in the development of the interview guide.³³⁻³⁵ An expert knowledgeable in these fields and in qualitative research reviewed the interview guide to ensure the questions were appropriate, understandable, and likely to encourage discussion. Finally, the guide was evaluated by a local South African university professor to minimize cross-cultural misunderstanding.

The focus groups lasted for an average of 71 minutes.

After a brief introduction from each participant and a few ice-breaking questions to create a welcoming environment, the interviewer began asking questions from the interview guide.

Sample questions included: (1) “Why do your players participate in sport?” (2) “What are your goals for your players?” and (3) “What are some of the major issues that you face with your players today?” The major components of the focus group interview results that constitute the focus of this manuscript are player participation and coaches’ goals, experiences, and strategies.

Data Analysis

Since the purpose of the study was exploratory in nature, the analysis procedures centered on seeking patterns rather than creating and/or testing theories.⁴³ Audio-recordings of the five focus groups were transcribed verbatim. Two members of the research team, including the interviewer, independently performed a comprehensive inductive content analysis using constant comparison and critical reflection to guide the analysis procedures, beginning with openly coding the raw meaning units and then more focused coding through the creation and organization of lower order themes and higher order themes.⁴⁴ At each level of analysis, the two researchers followed an iterative consensus validation process, and when differences arose between the researchers, the transcripts were re-read and discussed until consensus was reached.⁴⁵ Additionally, a peer debrief was conducted with a third investigator throughout the analysis procedures and in the final stage of analysis. Overall, the issues of trustworthiness and validity were ensured through the use of multiple coders, the process of iterative consensus validation, and the inclusion of a peer reviewer throughout the analysis procedures.^{43,46}

Results and Specific Discussion

Overall, the inductive content analysis yielded 334 raw meaning units, which coalesced into 120 lower order themes. These lower order themes were then organized into 44 higher order themes, all of which were under five general dimensions: (1) coaches’ goals for players, (2) reasons for sport participation, (3) barriers to sport participation, (4) strategies used by coaches to keep underserved children and youth involved in sport, and (5) recommendations for improvements in sport. These general dimensions are presented in the following section, along with an in-depth review of select higher order themes. A list of these higher order themes in the first three general dimensions can be found in Figure 1.

Coaches’ Goals for Players

In each focus group, the coaches discussed their personal goals they held for the children and youth whom they coached. This topic was critical to the study’s purpose, as one cannot fully understand the experiences of children and youth in these sport-plus programmes without exploring the coaches’ goals for their players, something often assumed but seldom asked when top-down approaches are adopted. Furthermore, the value of identifying coaches’ goals is demonstrated by the research findings of Smoll and Smith,⁴⁷ who reported that coaches’ goal priorities significantly influenced the young athletes whom they were coaching.

Holistic Development of Players

When asked to share their goals for their players, the coaches talked the most about their interest in developing their players holistically. While they wanted to help their players reach their potential in sport, the coaches understood that very few players make it to the professional level, so they felt it was critical for them to develop the “whole person,” and not just the “athlete.” As one coach from Focus Group Two (FG2) explained:

I think obviously we want to improve the players’ performance. I think that’s first and foremost. But I believe that sport is also a means to develop a person, to empower the person...to have the person learning to help themselves, learning some life skills.

Another coach described how he’s “always felt very strongly about holistic development. They’ve [the players] got to achieve in athletics, but they’ve got to achieve in other areas as well.” They were also concerned with the players transferring the life skills that they learned within the sport environment to academics, with several coaches highlighting this topic. This is an interesting finding in light of Coakley’s²⁷ recent suggestion that often those in sport buy into the sport evangelist myth that participation leads to psychosocial development without the need to intentionally foster such growth. Some of these coaches were aware of the inaccuracy of this myth, while others subscribed to this myth wholeheartedly – believing that sport participation was automatically leading to psychosocial development through sport and the transference of life and academic skills from the sport domain into the classroom and other areas of life. This misconception suggests that programmes and organisations need to provide coaching classes,

Figure 1. General Dimensions and Higher Order Themes

Coaches' Goals for Players	
- Remove Limitations and Expose to Better Life (4, 13)*	- Holistic Development of Players (4, 12)
- Find Balance Between Education and Sport (4, 10)	- Take Control of Their Lives and Their Future (3, 10)
- Avoid Challenges of Underserved Communities (3, 11)	- See Sport as Tool for a Better Life (3, 10)
- Process-Oriented Improvement in Sport (3, 7)	- Be Successful (3, 4)
- Be Active and Participate in Many Sports (3, 3)	- Have Fun (2, 3)
- Be Successful in Sport (2, 2)	- Motivate (2, 2)
- Enhanced Feelings of Competence (1, 6)	- Learn How to Prepare in Sport (1, 3)
- Break Down Beliefs in Racial Barriers in Sport (1, 2)	
Reasons for Sport Participation	
- Pursue New Opportunities (3, 14)	- Fun (3, 13)
- Extrinsic Rewards (4, 6)	- Social Interaction (3, 8)
- Follow Path Set by Others (2, 4)	- Avoid Negatives (2, 4)
- Sense of Belonging (2, 3)	- Being Outdoors and Active (1, 5)
- Compete / Achieve (1, 4)	- Easy to Play the Game (1, 3)
- Life Balance Between Education and Sport (1, 1)	
Barriers to Sport Participation	
- Issues with Resources (5, 53)	- Insufficient Support from Family / Community (4, 19)
- Insufficient Infrastructure for Sport Development (4, 6)	- Insufficient Support from Institutions (2, 13)
- Race / Class Perceptions for Certain Sports (2, 6)	- Lack of Skilled Coaches and Role Models (1, 3)
- Challenges for Females (2, 2)	- Life Balance Between Education and Sport (1, 1)
- Successful Sport Career Not Guaranteed Nor Path Fully Understood (2, 7)	
- Challenges Associated with Underserved Communities (1, 5)	

* The first number in the parentheses signifies the total number of focus groups in which this higher order theme was mentioned, while the second number stands for the number of raw meaning units for each theme.

mentors, and/or comprehensive education programmes that emphasize the requisite intentionality in facilitating psychosocial development through sport.⁴⁸

These efforts may help dispel the simplistic sport evangelist myth by ensuring that coaches have the awareness, knowledge, and skills to purposefully foster the psychosocial development of their athletes.

Removing Limitations and Working Towards a Better Life

Continuing with the theme of working towards a better life, the coaches discussed how many of their players did not have dreams of their own, which reflects the “live for the moment” mentality that often occurs with individuals living in poverty.⁴⁹ With this understanding, the coaches wanted their players to look beyond the present moment and begin to dream about and plan for their future. The coaches wanted to help their players believe in the possibility of having a better life, and they emphasized how important it was for their players to have a dream and then work towards that dream. A coach in FG4 described this hope in this way:

One thing that I want the kids to have is to have a dream. Because once you have a vision of what you want to see, and the person that I want to be when I get old, and the person that I am...the same thing for them to dream about, what is it that they want in 5, 10 years' time? And then, whatever goes in between that period of time, 20 or 21, then they must work or build that life.

The coaches believed that sports could help empower their players to take control of their lives and choose their future paths. This focus on the future has been found in other studies as well, with Burnett¹¹ finding that individuals in an impoverished South African community felt that sport could help young people become more employable. In order to effectively prepare their players for future employment, current and future familial roles, and other lifestyle factors, coaches must understand how to effectively support and promote the personal development of their players. This highlights the importance of coaching education programmes that will prepare these coaches to intentionally and consistently foster their players' personal development. It also suggests that coaches must become involved in the larger community, so that they can access

other needed resources and/or help their athletes to take advantage of any social capital that exists.

The coaches also talked extensively about their interest in exposing their players to a variety of opportunities, such as meeting other people, seeing other places, and having a variety of new experiences, since many of the young players are often so isolated in their communities. As one coach noted:

Through sport, they [the players] get an opportunity to widen their horizons. I can say that because lots of my kids...for weeks and for months, they stay in one place. Through sport, they can get out at least once or twice a month, and they can see other people, other places.

Another coach shared how sport could help the players “meet other people...see other places.” This focus on using sport for upward social mobility has been reported in other studies as well,¹⁴ suggesting that this is a common goal that coaches have for their players. For example, upward social mobility was addressed in Burnett’s¹⁴ research as part of the educational value of sport, such as the development of social and leadership skills through sport participation enabling youth to move away from a state of hopelessness and poverty. For these young players, it is possible that these new sport participation experiences could lead them from a state of intransitive thought, which is Friere’s⁵⁰ notion that people do not think critically about their social condition in the underserved communities, to a state of naïve transitivity, where the players may begin to perceive and respond to comments and questions about their context. The players may even progress to the final stage of critical transitivity, where they would be aware of their reality and the social conditions that construct this reality, and they may begin to consider how they may take critical action to transform this reality. When individuals reach this final stage, they have developed a critical consciousness, which is often the first step towards creating change in their own lives or even mobilizing a group of people to create change within the community.

Avoid Challenges of Underserved Communities

The coaches also felt that sport could help these children and youth stay busy, thereby avoiding the bad things that were happening in their communities. According to one coach in FG3, “We try to keep our kids busy with sport, because there is so much other things going on in our communities, like drug abuse, alcohol abuse.” Another coach acknowledged that “to play sport is to get kids away

from all the bad stuff.” Similarly, Burnett¹⁴ and Waardenburg⁵¹ found that coaches and teachers believed that sport could be used as a means to keep their players busy, and thus avoid any negative activities or friends in the community. This focus on sport simply keeping youth busy suggests that even if coaches are not using sport as a tool for development, there are still positive implications of the sport experience; in this case, players are kept safe and occupied through sport, thereby limiting the opportunities youth have to engage in negative behaviors. It can be easy for scholars to criticize sport programmes for not maximizing the benefits of the sport experience, but if the basic needs of a player are not met (e.g., safety, food, water, shelter), then it may not be possible for youth to learn the sport and life skills that are being taught.

In the present study, the coaches also believed that sport could help the participants forget about the hardships in their own lives. One of the coaches in FG1 described the following scene:

You have the small room [that is your home] and everybody’s in that room, mother and father are fighting because father is drunk. And you [the young person] sit in a corner where you cannot study. There’s no light. But out there [on the field], you make something. You forget yourself. You forget the hardship. You with other children. Nobody looks down on you. Nothing. And you can do your thing and you can do it nicely.

This quote highlights how the coaches truly believed that sport participation can provide their players with an opportunity to forget about their own lives for a short period of time and focus on something else that is more enjoyable. It is important, however, that coaches like these realize that providing periods of enjoyment and keeping young people out of harm’s way are not enough; these coaches need to help their players develop the skills and attitudes needed to make good choices, develop alternative life pathways, and learn to negotiate the many challenges they face in their communities.^{27,52,53} In addition, coaches may need to become politically active to help elicit changes in the power inequities that create the conditions in which these young people live in the first place.²⁷

Breaking Down Racial Barriers

The coaches acknowledged that sport has played a big role in breaking down apartheid, with one coach explaining this in more depth:

A lot of progress has been made. Let's be honest about that. Of course a lot still needs to be done, but I see sports also as a vehicle to improving relationships and breaking down the barriers. And it is doing it. I mean, it's wonderful to see sometimes they are out at, at the younger age, the children don't think in terms of race when they play together.

The coaches then shared their hope for the power of sport to help the country in the future, especially the racial divisions and perceptions from the past that still exist in South Africa today. In the words of one coach, "We're breaking it down, but like anything, it takes time... Like anything else, like apartheid, all those things. It takes time. You can't just change it, [snaps fingers] like that." Another black coach explained how she was hopeful that the sport of gymnastics was changing some of her gymnasts' perceptions of racial barriers. Before introducing the sport in her community, gymnastics used to be perceived as "a sport, in our minds, that is for whites." But after getting youth involved in gymnastics, she was hopeful that this perception was changing, with the young people realizing that "gymnastics, it's not for whites. It's for everyone who can do it." In fact, researchers have found that sport can contribute to the facilitation of social inclusion within ethnically diverse populations,^{56,57} such as that which exists in South Africa. However, it is not an easy process, as another coach acknowledged that there was some frustration with the racial divisions and perceptions that still exist, explaining that, "Sometimes, we think it's too slow in some instances and some areas. It take a long time to get there. Obviously, then the people get frustrated. Even the players, they get frustrated." Coaches must be cautioned not to see sport as some sort of panacea for facilitating social, cultural, and political change related to racial divisions and perceptions. When not carefully positioned and thoughtfully cultivated, SfD programmes have been shown to reproduce social inequalities and can create and/or deepen racial and gender divisions, political injustice, and the dominance of one group over another.⁴⁸

Reasons for Sport Participation

Moving away from the coaches' goals for their players, there was also a discussion centered on why the youth from these underserved South African communities may be interested in playing sports. This topic was deemed to be critical because there is a distinct need for parents, coaches, and programme providers to understand why youth are interested in participating in sports; similarly, it is important for larger public and private governing bodies, organisations, and institutions to have this information from

those operating on the ground level. This information will hopefully allow the programmes targeting these individuals to tailor the programme designs to match their interests, as there has been a history of top-down programmes created in the past without a full understanding of why the young people may be interested in participating.¹⁸ This reflects the lack of community involvement in top-down programmes as well as the assumption that youth from different social and cultural backgrounds participate in sport for the same reasons as those in Western societies. Unfortunately, despite good intentions, this often results in ineffective programmes that are not highly attended and are not serving the targeted populations, especially when compared with inside-up programmes that have widespread community involvement and investment.

Pursue New Opportunities

The most frequently cited reason for sport participation revolved around the young players pursuing new opportunities in their lives. This mirrors the coaches' own goals for their players to have new experiences that will open up their minds and help them dream about and plan for their futures. The coaches discussed how their players were interested in having experiences outside of the community, allowing them to see new places and meet new people. In the words of one coach from FG5, "Most of them [the players] just do sport to get out of the community." The coaches also talked about how their players were interested in participating in a variety of sports, regardless of the type of sport.

Fun and Amusement

Time and again, the coaches discussed how their players were drawn to sports because of their interest in having fun. The coaches felt that their players were often motivated to play because of their enjoyment when playing the sport and their love for the game. This finding suggests that enjoyment and fun may be universal reasons for children and youth sport participation, as a study commissioned by the United States Anti-Doping Agency⁵⁸ found that young people cite fun as their primary reason for sport participation. In the current study, one coach explained that, "kids basically play the game because they love the game." This matches the findings of Waardenburg,⁵¹ who reported that the young players were interested in sport serving as a form of amusement.

Social Interaction and Sense of Belonging

The coaches discussed their players' yearning for social interaction with their friends and teammates, as well as the need for belonging to a larger group. In the words of a coach from FG3, "For kids to be involved in sport, it gives them that feeling that they belong somewhere." In fact, some of the coaches believed that many of these young people wanted to develop a family within their sport environment, since so many of them did not have a healthy family environment at home. As one coach in FG4 explained, "Sport was the real family."

While it may seem as if this interest in building friendships and being part of a team is trivial, this can actually be linked to the concept of social capital, which can be defined as advantages that are gained through social connectivity.⁵⁹ Within the context of these underserved communities, it is possible for this connectivity to allow young people to develop social and emotional skills that will be helpful later in life, build a network of individuals who will support one another, and become more active in social life in the community.⁶⁰ In fact, research has shown that networks within marginalized communities based on mutual trust, shared values, and reciprocal ubuntu (sharing what one has) result in the development of intra-group cohesion, inter-group cooperation, and multi-group collaboration within the community.^{11,61,62} This can result in a "protective effect" of social capital, where young people care for their friends and teammates,⁶³ which can be critical in the underserved South African communities where it can be extremely unsafe to walk alone, especially for females.⁶⁴ Additionally, enhanced social capital can also result in a decline in delinquency among underserved youth.^{65,66} Narrowing in on previous research on sport for development programmes in South Africa, several studies have found that social capital is one of the most significant products of these programmes,^{11,51} which matches the present research findings.

Barriers to Sport Participation

Barriers that are preventing players from participating in sport or even causing them to discontinue their sport participation is another topic that is critical for program providers to understand. Top-down programmes often assume that these barriers are similar to those experienced in sport for development programmes in Western societies, leading to insufficient programme designs and implementation. For this reason, it is critical for those in SfD to understand the specific barriers for the underserved children and youth they may serve in each community, so

that these barriers can be circumvented when possible. Therefore, this topic was addressed in each focus group, so that the coaches at the ground level participating in inside-up sport-plus programmes could provide a detailed description of these barriers and how they impacted sport participation. The coaches were also asked to identify their strategies for circumventing these barriers and recommendations for improvements in these communities. These practical implications are included in the following subsections.

Issues with Resources

The most significant issue that was cited by the coaches in all of the focus groups was the overall lack of resources, including a lack of facilities, equipment, funding, and transportation. This overwhelming lack of resources is not surprising, given that poverty represents a process where vulnerable populations, such as the coaches and athletes in these communities, do not have access to the resources that are needed.^{14,67} In fact, previous researchers in South Africa have found similar issues with a lack of physical resources.⁶⁸ In particular, the coaches in this study discussed how the schools and communities rarely provide the facilities that are required for sport participation. As one of the coaches in FG1 explained, "The stupid government builds a new school...and they don't build a school hall, so they have no place indoors to do anything. So they [the sport teams] have to be in the passage ways, in front of classrooms."

Another significant issue with resources was the concern about funding, with one coach acknowledging that "we haven't got that much money to do all of those things." More specifically, the coaches in FG2 discussed how money is often available for certain sports (e.g., rugby) but not for other sports (e.g., soccer). The coaches also identified the need for feasible transportation options for the players to and from their practice and competition locations, which are often outside of the communities, due to the lack of facilities inside of the communities. According to one coach in FG3, "Our schools haven't got school buses where they drop kids from point A to point B." This has proven to be a significant barrier for many of the players, as they cannot afford to pay for transportation to and from some of the practice and competition locations. These concerns surrounding resources in this and other studies suggest that there may be a need for practitioners to either become educated about fundraising and fund development (e.g., grant writing, marketing strategies, community outreach) or

hire qualified individuals to take on this critical role. It might also be important for practitioners to learn how to become more politically engaged to move local governments to do more to respond to community needs.

Insufficient Familial Support

Another barrier to sport participation that was identified in all of the focus groups was the lack of parental support, with some players possessing “all the potential, but they don’t have the support.” This has been found in the literature as well, with Burnett¹⁴ reporting how the young participants from the underserved communities of the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province did not have the care and support that was needed for optimal development. Additionally, Waardenburg⁵¹ found that parents rarely attended the sporting events of their children. In the present study, the coaches described how white parents with more resources often provide this support by watching their children participate in sport and providing transportation and funding for their sport involvement. In contrast, in the underserved communities, the parents often work so hard to make ends meet that they do not know their children are even participating in sport, and even if they are aware of their children’s participation, they are still unable to attend any of the competitions or give their children money for their sport participation. According to a coach in FG2, “It is a family struggle to get food onto the table...sometimes you’ll take a child to go and play, and these parents don’t even know, ‘cause they don’t have the means to come there.” One coach in FG1 explained how the “parents are not there, even if they are not working...and when there’s a competition, you ask [the] mother, ‘can you come and see and watch?’ They’re not interested.” This highlights how some of the parents just do not understand why their children want to participate in sport. In fact, for females, many parents are scared that their girls are in danger because of the crime that exists on or near the sports fields. “They [the parents] don’t understand why a little girl must go to the sports field and spend the time, all day, because it’s dangerous and the crime that is there outside and everything.” Despite this resistance, the coaches stressed the importance of involving the parents in a meaningful way, so they have a better understanding of the sport environment and the potential for sport to help their children. One strategy used by a coach in FG4 was organizing “committees that are in conversation with the parents, so that the parents can also be involved directly and then they can understand what this thing [sport] is really all about.”

Another challenge is that parents do not have extra money

for the costs associated with sport participation. According to one coach in FG4, “There’s always a struggle when it comes to generating money for transport and playing kits and equipment.” This confirms previous research by Botsis et al.,⁶⁹ who found that parents or guardians from underserved communities are often unable to pay for the added cost of sport participation for their children. This lack of parental support often requires the coaches to become the main providers of transportation, equipment, and support for their players, which can be difficult for them. The coaches truly believed that if the level of parental support could be improved, there would be a discernible impact on the number of children and youth becoming involved in sports, staying involved, and participating more frequently. The findings from this study and others highlight a need for SfD researchers to investigate how parents prioritize their discretionary income (if any) and what methods are effective in changing parents’ spending habits with discretionary income. Additionally, it could be beneficial for SfD practitioners to examine alternative means of payment for transportation, kits, and equipment, such as a barter system (e.g., exchanging baked goods for soccer cleats) or a time share (e.g., exchanging an hour of tutoring or housework by the parent for an hour of transportation by the bus driver). These methods of trade that reflect the spirit of ubuntu have been found to be utilized in African communities that lack resources¹¹ and could prove to be beneficial in providing these much needed services and sport equipment.

Insufficient Infrastructure to Support Sport Development

Many of the coaches also discussed their concerns with the infrastructure for sport in underserved communities throughout South Africa. This was largely based on their belief that there were not many sport options for young people in these communities, resulting in some youth choosing not to participate in the sports that were available. Some of the coaches voiced their belief that this issue was related to race, as there is an abundance of sport options for youth in white communities, while there are minimal sport options in coloured and black communities. The coaches also highlighted the fact that their players have even fewer sport options when they transition from primary school to secondary school, as this is when soccer begins to dominate as a sport choice, and rugby, cricket, and/or hockey are sometimes not offered, along with a number of other sports. As one coloured coach from FG5 described:

We as a [primary] school, we try to introduce so many sports to all the kids. But when they grow bigger, go to high

...school, and probably afterwards, then the sport coach decreases. Like, for instance, in this community, we only get soccer... 'cause soccer is the most popular sport in our coloured...community. But if you look at the white community, there's so many other sports.

Race and Class Perceptions

Another barrier that was a key topic of conversation in some of the focus groups was the fact that there are race and class perceptions for certain sports. One coach explained this perception in the following way:

Traditionally, rugby was always seen as a white man's sport. I must use the racial term. It was a...white man's sport in the old apartheid era. And that was a way they showed their superiority. By beating opposition. And soccer was always seen as a black sport. That's unfortunate, but that's the truth.

Additionally, some of the coaches in the focus groups perceived a resistance to change in the overall structure of sport in South Africa, especially concerning the development of soccer in the schools and throughout South Africa. Long et al⁷⁰ have suggested that there are many forms of exclusion in sports that persist each and every day in these communities. Specifically, the coaches believed that rugby receives more funding, leading to more equipment and more opportunities for those participating in that sport. The coaches felt that this was due to three main factors: (1) there are fewer children interested in playing rugby, resulting in more money and opportunities to go around; (2) there isn't much equipment needed for soccer; and (3) rugby has historically been a white person's sport. The coaches believed that soccer is finally receiving more attention and funding due to the fact that South Africa hosted the soccer World Cup in 2010, despite the uphill battle to get the sport in the schools and communities. However, the coaches believed that without the 2010 World Cup, this change in attention and funding would not have happened this soon, or perhaps even at all.

Challenges Associated with Underserved Communities

Other barriers that coaches believed often prevent youth from underserved communities from getting involved in sport were based on the realities of living in underserved communities in South Africa. For example, the coaches in FG2 felt that hunger and drugs were issues that the players from underserved communities had to face, while those from more privileged backgrounds did not have these same

concerns. One coach described how coaches had to “compete with all these drugs” when trying to get young people from underserved communities to participate in sports. The coaches also discussed how many of the youth in underserved South African communities had to act like adults, even when they were very young. “They have to act like adults. They don't have the adults. They get confronted with a lot of things that they have to deal with, but they are still children.” The responsibilities placed on these young people often become barriers to sport participation, especially for females. For example, many females “are expected to cook and to clean the house,” which often prevents them from participating in sports. A previous study also showed that girls and boys from a South African township often had responsibilities at home, such as caring for their younger siblings, which prevent them from playing sports as often as they would like.⁵¹ These findings about the implications of living in underserved communities in South Africa match Coakley's^{26,27} belief that sport experiences vary based on individuals' social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. This leads back to the importance of inside-up programming efforts where community members are involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of sport for development programmes.

The coaches strongly believed that the top-down government programmes in their communities did not consider the specific context of each individual community, which resulted in ineffective programmes that were not supported by the community. As one coach described:

They [the government] don't do research. And they will even come and give me instructions about what I'm supposed to do, while I know the need, but I must follow them, because they are my bosses. They say I must do this, even though I know it's not relevant.

Instead of taking a solely top-down approach, the coaches advocated for a combined approach that incorporates both inside-up and top-down variables. By including the government in the programming efforts, the coaches felt that the programmes were more likely to be long-term in nature and more capable of securing funding. With community members involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the SfD programmes, these programmes were also more likely to address community needs and receive public support. However, the coaches in this study, similar to coaches operating in underserved communities around the world, often are not well versed in the politics of how to implement community change and become involved in and successfully negotiate

government and community partnerships. This is a valuable set of skills that coaching educators should consider addressing in sport for development coaching education programmes in the future.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this study that must be acknowledged. First, by utilizing a focus group methodology, it is possible that the participants may have felt uncomfortable in sharing their experiences in front of a larger group, although the interviewer tried to minimize any discomfort by fostering a welcoming and safe environment throughout the entire focus group interview; from her perspective, the coaches felt comfortable in the focus group setting and were not afraid to speak up. Additionally, the varied compositions of the focus groups, both in gender and ethnicity, could have had an effect on the climate and tone of the discussions. There is also the possibility that the participants could have reacted negatively or positively to the interviewer's skin color, gender, or nationality, which would impact the discussions within the focus group interviews. Another limitation centered on the requirement for the participants to speak and understand conversational English, which likely influenced the composition of the focus groups. Finally, the players' reasons for and barriers to sport participation were identified by the coaches, since the players were not directly involved in this study. While it was clear that the coaches were very close with their players and knowledgeable about these topics, the study would have been stronger with direct participation from the players. In future studies, it would be helpful for the players to be involved, so as to address this limitation.

Conclusion

The present study was designed to fill a gap in sport for development research within South Africa by hearing the voices of coaches at the grassroots level who are working in a variety of programmes and organisations largely in the Western Cape region of South Africa. This inside-up approach led to an in-depth understanding of local sport-plus programmes and the coaches' experiences on the ground. This also resulted in an exploration of alternative knowledges and voices about various South African economic, social, cultural, and political issues as related to the coaches' and players' sport experiences, which was highlighted as an area requiring further investigation.¹⁹⁻²¹ Additionally, these research findings provide a better understanding of how SfD programmes can be designed to address local community needs and concerns, with the coaches recommending a joint top-down developmental

approach and inside-up indigenous approach for local programming efforts.

When considering all of the findings from this study, it becomes clear that there is a major concern for helping young people in these underserved South African communities find their purpose in life. The coaches were convinced that sport was an excellent tool for empowering these young people to take control of their lives, with sport being used for upward mobility both within and outside of the communities. Similarly, the coaches shared how their players were also using sport as a developmental tool for their personal and professional lives, such as preparing for future employment, connecting with their peers, and working towards a university scholarship. While this recognition of the potential of sport for development in these players' lives is very exciting, there are still a number of barriers that often lead these young people to discontinuing their sport participation or simply prevent sport participation at the outset. This includes the lack of resources within these communities, the pervasive racial perceptions that are tied to a number of sports, and the debilitating lack of support from a variety of sources, including: parents, peers, schools, community members, and the local, provincial, and national government. Despite these barriers, the coaches were strong in their belief that sport is having a positive impact on many of the young athletes in their sport-plus programmes, and the coaches were hopeful that sport would continue to be the focus of the South African government for developmental progress within underserved communities. As with any successful sport-plus programme, the use of evaluation in determining the effectiveness of programme implementation is imperative in order to maximize the positive impact on the youth, coaches, and communities involved as well as the fundraising potential for these programmes. It is also critical for coaches and programmer providers to become more politically astute and work closely with community leaders to better inform governments of the importance of these programmes and the need for more resources to support them.

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