JSFD

Journal of Sport for Development

Table of Contents

Original Research

Moving beyond disciplinary silos: The potential for transdisciplinary research in Sport for Development

Meredith A. Whitley[1], Holly Collison-Randall[2], Paul M. Wright[3], Simon C. Darnell[4], Nico Schulenkorf[5], Eric Knee[1], Nicholas L. Holt[6] & Justin Richards[7]

[1] Adelphi University, USA
[2] Loughborough University, UK
[3] Northern Illinois University, USA
[4] University of Toronto, Canada
[5] University of Technology Sydney, Australia
[6] University of Alberta, Canada
[7] Victoria University Wellington, New Zealand

Corresponding author email: mwhitley@adelphi.edu

ABSTRACT

The Sport for Development (SfD) field is transdisciplinary by nature, and yet scholars tend to stay within their disciplinary perspectives in their study of SfD. There is a need for more collaborative and collective approaches in SfD research. Transdisciplinary research facilitates conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological innovations that transcend disciplinary boundaries, creating new knowledge that can advance a field. The purpose of this paper is to critically review the disciplinary trends in SfD research within (respectively) sport sociology, social anthropology, sport management, public health, leisure, sport pedagogy, and sport psychology, with a particular focus on where there may be intersection, duplication, obfuscation, and omission between these disciplines. Disciplinary intersections are then considered, along with gaps in the SfD evidence base that are ripe for transdisciplinary research. The paper concludes with an exploration of possibilities for future transdisciplinary research in SfD.

MOVING BEYOND DISCIPLINARY SILOS: THE POTENTIAL FOR TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT

Disciplines are social constructs that have conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological tendencies, while *fields* are cross-disciplinary areas of inquiry and practice that require multiple perspectives to understand and address complex social problems (Stokols et al., 2013). Sport for Development (SfD) is a cross-disciplinary field, with SfD programs seeking to address complex and multifaceted social problems (e.g., conflict, homelessness, poverty, mental health) that require diverse perspectives, collaborations, and partnerships (Massey et al., 2015; Svensson & Loat, 2019). As the SfD field has grown, so has the scholarship exploring many facets of the field (Schulenkorf et al., 2016); this has included valuable cross-disciplinary areas of inquiry, though most SfD research tends to stay within disciplinary boundaries (Haudenhuyse et al., 2020; Massey & Whitley, 2019). Although research within a single discipline can be quite valuable for answering discipline-specific questions, these approaches "may not provide the necessary tools to fully understand and address complex scientific and societal problems" (Stokols et al., 2013, p. 5). This is the value of cross-disciplinary research, which integrates conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological approaches to enhance understanding and identify solutions (Haudenhuyse et al., 2020; Massey & Whitley, 2019).

For a practical example of how cross-disciplinary research can benefit the SfD field, consider the political orientation of SfD programs. Scholars like Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) have drawn a distinction between the dominant and transformative approaches represented in the SfD paradigm. In the former, the goal is most often to use sport to teach

young people the skills they need to survive amongst and within structures of inequity (broadly defined). By contrast, the latter approach is primarily focused on social transformation, a process that requires (at the least) a commitment to critical pedagogy and to the co-transformation of both organizers and participants in SfD. This distinction suggests that SfD research is needed accounting not just for whether SfD works (or not), but also examining the kind of change that SfD programs imagine and pursue. The benefits of this to SfD practice would be a clearer and more refined understanding of social change, and SfD activity that is more connected to a program theory or theory of change, and therefore more rigorous and replicable. It would also encourage SfD practice that is connected to and implemented with participants, rather than simply delivered to them. This, we suggest, further illustrates the importance of cross-disciplinary research that is integrative and broad-gauged.

There are several ways for SfD scholars to move beyond disciplinary perspectives to embrace more collaborative and collective approaches: multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity. If we use the fruit metaphor from Nissani (1995) to elucidate these terms, research within one disciplinary perspective is fruit (e.g., apple, banana, mango) served on its own. A multidisciplinary approach (i.e., multiple perspectives within a team) is a fruit salad, while an interdisciplinary approach (i.e., synthesis of perspectives from different disciplines) is a fruit smoothie. Extending this metaphor to a transdisciplinary approach (i.e., unity of perspectives beyond disciplines), Austin and colleagues (2008) described the smoothie as the foundation for a new dessert. Transdisciplinary research facilitates conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological innovations that transcend disciplinary boundaries, creating new knowledge and innovative solutions that can advance a field (e.g., the SfD field; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Although the degree of integration increases as researchers shift from multidisciplinarity to interdisciplinarity to transdisciplinarity, the boundaries between these categories are blurry (Adler & Stewart, 2010; Stokols et al., 2013). The hallmark for multidisciplinary research tends to be researchers from different disciplines studying the same problem from their own perspectives, yet combining their ideas, methods, and/or findings at some point in the research process. Interdisciplinary research teams work more closely, integrating conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological approaches from multiple disciplines as they study the same problem. Transdisciplinary research takes this a step further, creating "novel conceptual and methodological approaches that synthesize and extend discipline-specific perspectives,

theories, methods, and translational strategies to yield innovative solutions" (Stokols et al., 2013, p. 6). Thus, transdisciplinary research teams transcend disciplinary boundaries, extend knowledge in a particular field, and identify practical solutions to the problems under study.

The purpose of this paper is to critically review the disciplinary trends in SfD research within (respectively) sport sociology, social anthropology, sport management, public health, leisure, sport pedagogy, and sport psychology, with a particular focus on where there may be intersection, duplication, obfuscation, and omission between these disciplines. Through this, we—a multidisciplinary writing team—hope to stimulate reflection, dialogue, and action on cross-disciplinary research in SfD, with a particular focus on transdisciplinary research. Although transdisciplinary perspectives beyond sport are also imperative to the ongoing growth and development of the SfD field, a recent special issue published by Haudenhuyse and colleagues (2020) started to explore these perspectives and possibilities. We encourage readers to consider the associated outputs (i.e., special issue and paper) in tandem.

This paper begins with an examination of SfD disciplinary trends. Next, disciplinary intersections are considered, along with gaps in the SfD evidence base that are ripe fortransdisciplinary research. We conclude with an exploration of possibilities for future transdisciplinary research in SfD.

DISCIPLINARY TRENDS

There are distinct lines of research in SfD within each discipline of study, more often grounded in discipline-specific, rather than transdisciplinary, perspectives (Massey & Whitley, 2019). In this section, we explore these disciplinary trends, with a particular focus on the conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological tendencies. We also identify the dominant research lines in each discipline, along with novel or emerging research topics that may have a significant impact on the SfD field. Although we have adopted a cohesive voice to guide our reflections in this paper, we have also intentionally retained the discipline-specific vocabularies, styles, and structures of communication within this section to underscore disciplinary norms. Each subsection below was written by a leading SfD scholar with substantial training, education, and knowledge of their 'home discipline'.

Sport Sociology

From a sociological perspective, SfD research tends most

often to inquire and conduct research along vectors of power and authority. Questions asked most often by sociologists are those such as: Who defines what counts as development in SfD? On whose authority is SfD conceptualized, organized, and implemented? And how do these structures and patterns of authority confirm and/or challenge broader social, political, and economic hierarchies? To this end, sociological approaches to SfD tend to embrace the perspective that sport and development, respectively, are not inherent, neutral, or apolitical but rather historically, politically, and socially constructed. This, then, leads to sociological research that utilizes theories of power, such as neo-Marxist understandings of hegemony and Foucauldian theories of governmentality and bio-power. More recently, post-human and materialist understandings of the significance of non-human actors have also found their way into sociological accounts of SfD. Overall, these approaches to SfD have led sociologists concerned with SfD to think about the ways that 'evidence' of sport and/or development is also socially constructed, and often produced and constrained through the same relations of power that underpin the inequities that SfD programs aim to redress.

The most common or dominant lines of research from a sociological approach to the study of SfD have focused on whether, and/or to what extent, SfD programs challenge social inequity versus reproduce it. A most helpful perspective, as discussed above, is that put forth by Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) who differentiate between the dominant and transformative approach to SfD. In the former, SfD programs work primarily to 'teach' young people how to survive amidst inequity, but stop short of challenging the structures of inequity themselves. By contrast, the latter, or transformative, approach requires critical pedagogy and an activist sensibility to try and change the conditions that create and sustain inequity in the first place. Investigating and assessing SfD along these kinds of conceptual lines has become a major thread of sociologically-driven SfD research.

In turn, critical sociologists concerned with SfD have investigated, and sometimes criticized, the processes by which some people are deemed to be the beneficiaries of SfD programs and others the stewards. In many cases, this approach has used the recognized sociological categories of race, gender, and class as lenses through which to assess who is seen to be in charge and who in receipt of SfD. For example, Hayhurst (2013) has analyzed the development idea of the Girl Effect, which posits that investing in girls has cascading development benefits. In her analysis, the Girl Effect serves to make girls the targets of development and SfD, but often in ways that hail them as responsible for

their own success (or failure), a perspective that aligns with the hegemony of neo-liberal philosophy and policies. Similarly, Darnell (2007) has argued that SfD programs are often organized along racial hierarchies, in which whiteness stands as a normative, and often unexamined, standard and marker of authority. SfD can, in such cases, reify race rather than challenge racism.

From a methodological perspective, the most novel research in SfD using sociological perspectives has arguably been that which has employed auto-ethnographic techniques to examine and reveal the relations of power and authority in SfD. A preeminent example of this is Forde's (2015) self-assessment of his time as a white Canadian male in Lesotho, in which he uses his own experiences—and his own graphic illustrations of these experiences—as a way to examine issues of spatial privilege, whiteness, and hegemonic masculinity as they are manifest in the context of SfD.

In terms of emerging research, the post-humanist perspective, led by scholars like Darnell (e.g., Darnell et al., 2018), Richelieu and Webb (2019), McSweeny (e.g., McSweeney et al., 2021), and others, has shown that non-human elements of SfD, like bicycles, money, and even the 'facts' of SfD itself, all contribute to the assembling of SfD into a coherent and recognizable social formation. From this perspective, SfD does not simply exist but is "assembled" through a series of human and non-human interactions. In turn, it is incumbent on the sociologist to explain the coherence and (in)stability of the facts of SfD's existence.

Of course, the sociological approach to SfD also presents challenges and limitations. Chief among these is the difficulty of transferring the insights of critical social theory to the practicalities or management of SfD programs. Similarly, sociologists' interests in issues of power and politics are not always shared by those working in SfD, who face the daily challenge of responding to often stark inequities. For these reasons, the sociological analysis of SfD should be combined with other disciplinary approaches.

Social Anthropology

Social anthropology is driven and guided by contextual curiosity. Within SfD, social anthropologists are drawn to the diverse cultures, people, performances, and rituals of both development and sport (Collison, 2018). Anthropological research in and around SfD tends to focus on the exploration of specific cultural contexts in which SfD is managed, employed, and experienced (Collison, 2016). The entry point of exploration is often negotiated through local populations, specific groups (indigenous or

social), or organizations who share a sense of curiosity or desire for deeper meaning and knowledge. Although many disciplines have well defined lines of engagement and concise points of questioning, anthropology is traditionally more concerned with the mechanisms (in this case, sport and development), localities, social networks, and groups in which to co-create, narrate, and translate information. Therefore, precise questioning is a starting point but open to rigorous reconceptualization throughout a research cycle. Anthropological explorations will focus on social processes and realities, considering the 'how' and 'why' dynamics of phenomena that exist or are experienced. The notions of power, agency, social organization, sub-culture construction and performances, resilience, motivation, and organizational behavior are central themes for anthropological inquiry within SfD. However, it is the philosophies, methods, knowledge production, and interpretivist process that distinguishes and complements other disciplinary research within similar contexts (Burnett, 2014).

Theoretical applications in SfD are potential bridging mechanisms between anthropology and the interconnecting disciplines of sport sociology, sport psychology, and sport management. Although social anthropologists are often influenced by scholars such as Clifford Geertz and his contributions to symbolic anthropology and the translation of knowledge through 'thick description' (1973), anthropological accounts of SfD tend to be theoretically influenced by sociologists who have cultivated thinking around core concepts such as social capital theory (Putnam, 1993), glocalization (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2012), and power (Foucault, 1998). Within SfD explorations, anthropologists also frequently seek theoretical guidance from fellow anthropologists within interrelated fields of study; for example, social anthropologists focused on relationships in development (Mosse, 2014), contemporary social change (De Sardan, 2005), modernity and personhood (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001), youthhood (Durham, 2000), and the anthropology of sport (Besnier et al., 2018). Theory, therefore, is a multi-layered framing device but the distinction lies in the narration of knowledge and realities by collaborators, gatekeepers, and others who become the features of anthropological research.

The distinction between anthropology and other social sciences is its enhanced emphasis on ethnographic fieldwork, which is considered the most important source of knowledge acquisition, production, and translation (Collison & Marchesseault, 2018). Ethnographic fieldwork goes beyond 'being present' within the alien or quasi-familiar realities of others; it requires a commitment to long-term social interaction, intensive rapport building, at times uncomfortable engagements, and sharing the senses and

emotions (Marchesseault, 2016; Van Maanen, 2011). The interpersonal nature of ethnographic fieldwork results in rich accounts of SfD, narrated by the scholar (in first person) but through the voices of those from the field. The sophistication of ethnography is developed through the processes of reflection, interpretation, and sense-making which situates knowledge and realities within broader academic and development discourse (Eriksen, 1995). The methodological principles of social anthropology have sought, over time, to reduce neo-liberal/colonial tensions embedded within SfD research (Hayhurst, 2009). Ultimately, evidence is provided by local populations, communities, and/or organizations, through their voices and their tutelage on social and cultural phenomena.

Increasingly, anthropologists are less resistant towards their 'expert' identity in their research spaces and are connecting more directly to applied research aims. Working with local populations and organizations to create locally informed change has gained traction and presents another opportunity for social anthropology to interplay with connecting social sciences as the desire and commitment for action research gains momentum. Applied anthropology within SfD promotes the discipline within meso and macro levels of SfD, particularly within institutional structures, beyond the assumed place of social anthropology at the grassroots level (Green, 2003). In another twist to traditional anthropological research, the requirement to explore unknown peoples, cultures, and societies is being contested. At home, ethnography has recently gained traction as a pursuit to gain insight within more familiar yet complex social systems manifested through community sport participation (Dyck, 2012).

Social anthropology has at times sat awkwardly within a fast paced and highly institutionalized SfD sector. The key challenges lie in the requirement for long-term and immersive engagement within fieldwork spaces, a luxury and privilege that many scholars struggle to secure due to funding limitations and the pressures of time. Whilst the intricate and rich findings are often very desirable to academic peers, policymakers, and practitioners, the drive for quantitative validation and the formalized framing of results often leaves anthropological knowledge fixed in the realm of context as opposed to intelligence that can be applied to wider debates and more pragmatic endeavours. Due to this, collaboration with other disciplines allows exploratory approaches, like social anthropology, to thrive and translate to multiple audiences.

Sport Management

Management scholars analyze the managerial aspects of SfD

projects, including the specific tactics, strategies, and implications of sport-related development work that underpin many contemporary initiatives (Schulenkorf, 2017). The increasing prominence of management as an area of study within SfD is important for a number of reasons, including current and future planning of projects as well as a strategic move towards growing, leveraging, and sustaining SfD programs and events for (wider) community benefit (e.g., Misener et al., 2015; Schulenkorf, 2012; Spaaij, 2012; Welty Peachey et al., 2015). Key questions asked by management scholars therefore include: How are SfD programs designed and implemented to achieve desired outcomes? How can we strategically plan for sustained project delivery? How are communities best empowered to manage programs independently of external support? And which partnerships are critical to grow and leverage program opportunities?

The abovementioned questions indicate that research on managerial aspects in SfD has largely taken a qualitative stance. In particular, social constructivism and interpretive modes of inquiry have been applied which acknowledge that reality is socially constructed, difficult to measure, and best understood in context (Glesne, 1999; Schulenkorf et al., 2020). In line with this qualitative stance, the preferred research methods in SfD management have been interviews and focus group discussions, together with observations and document reviews. However, in recent years there have been calls for new and innovative approaches to research across socio-managerial aspects of sport (Hoeber & Shaw, 2017), including SfD-related investigations that feature Indigenous methodologies, participant action research, auto-ethnographies, photo or video documentations, children's drawings, reflective journal pieces, or different forms of art, drama, and dance. Although some progress has been made, engagement with non-conventional methods still deserves more attention from SfD management scholars.

Overall, a great variety of managerial topics has been covered by SfD scholars, but a recent review of literature categorized socio-managerial research under the following four headings: (a) SfD programming and design, (b) sustainable management and capacity building, (c) creating and leveraging impacts and outcomes, and (d) conceptual/theoretical advancements (Schulenkorf, 2017). Importantly, the review also suggested that future studies could more closely attend to the managerial concepts of leadership, entrepreneurship, and Design Thinking to maximize the potential of sport to contribute to innovative and sustained development outcomes. Five years later, all three areas have indeed received increased attention by management scholars. First, leadership is today perhaps the

fastest-growing space in SfD management; it includes a variety of investigations into leadership practices and approaches, including shared leadership (Jones et al., 2018, Kang & Svensson, 2019; Svensson et al., 2019), servant leadership (Welty Peachey & Burton, 2017; Welty Peachey et al., 2018), and new conceptualizations such as cross-border leadership (Frawley et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship studies have also started to emerge more prominently, including discussions on cause champions and accelerators and their (managerial) roles as social and peace entrepreneurs (Cohen & Welty Peachey, 2015; McSweeney, 2020; Svensson & Seifried, 2017; Whitley & Welty Peachey, 2020). Finally, the concept of Design Thinking has gained some traction, too, with scholars interested in the organization and implementation of SfD-related innovation (Joachim et al., 2020, 2021).

Looking forward, a number of new exciting opportunities for management scholars exist in the field of SfD, both within and beyond their immediate discipline. For instance, scholars have only started to explore the role of past participants and their post-program connection with the SfD field (e.g., Hoekman et al., 2019). As such, it will be important to conduct future socio-managerial studies that determine if and how participants stay involved with their own SfD initiative longer term; how they share, use, and/or transfer their experiences to influence sport or other community development purposes; if they take up coaching or management positions in SfD programs or if they prefer to move out of the SfD field; and how their knowledge as 'former participants turned change agents' can best be harnessed or leveraged by the field.

Public Health

Public health research has historically used epidemiological and evaluation methods to investigate the following areas: (a) cause of diseases (e.g., what is the prevalence of physical inactivity and how is it related to depression?); (b) effect of interventions (e.g., what is the impact of an SfD program on depression?); and (c) implementation of interventions (e.g., how is an SfD program aimed at reducing depression delivered?; Diderichsen, 2018). Research into causation in public health is underpinned by the hierarchy of evidence, which ranks different study designs according to the level of certainty that a particular exposure (e.g., physical activity participation) leads to a designated outcome (e.g., depression; Petticrew & Roberts, 2003). The randomized controlled trial is the only intervention study design included in the hierarchy of evidence, but its limitations for research into behavior change initiatives like those delivered in the SfD field are increasingly being recognized (Petticrew & Roberts, 2003).

Over recent years, there has been a growing interest in the value of quasi-experimental study designs and using mixed methods and data triangulation as part of outcome evaluations for public health interventions (Bauman & Nutbeam, 2014). The hierarchy of evidence also has limited utility for process evaluation of program delivery, which is now being addressed by frameworks within the rapidly emerging field of implementation science (e.g., Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research; Czosnek et al., 2020).

SfD research within the public health discipline can be broadly split into two categories. Firstly, there is an established research agenda on understanding the most effective ways to promote physical activity participation. Public health has historically defined physical activity according to four domains in which it takes place: transportation, occupation, domestic, and leisure-time (Strath et al., 2013). SfD falls within the leisure-time domain, although there have been concerns that SfD interventions track certain outcomes (e.g., cognitive, affective, social) far more than physical activity (Whitley et al., 2019). Thus, participation levels in youth sport and how much this contributes to overall physical activity levels in different sociodemographic populations is an ongoing area of inquiry internationally (Howie et al., 2020). This is accompanied by research on the determinants of physical activity participation, with a particular focus on the efficacy of different intervention and policy approaches for increasing and maintaining this across the lifespan (Howie et al., 2020). Much of this evidence is conceptualized using the socioecological model for behavior change, which is the predominant theoretical framework for describing the determinants of physical activity participation in public health research (Bauman et al., 2012).

Secondly, there is ongoing research investigating the link between physical activity participation and various health outcomes. Most of the research to date has focused on physical health outcomes, which include cardiovascular disease (e.g. heart disease, hypertension), metabolic disease (e.g. diabetes, obesity), and musculoskeletal disease (e.g. osteoporosis, osteoarthritis; Bull et al., 2020). There is also a rapidly emerging evidence base for the relationship between physical activity and mental illness (e.g. depression, anxiety; Teychenne et al., 2020). Whilst the physiological link between physical activity and physical health outcomes is well established, there is increasing investigation into understanding the more nuanced neurobiological, psychosocial, and behavioral mechanisms for positive mental health outcomes (Lubans et al., 2016). It is now recognized that the context in which physical activity takes place is an important 'dosage' consideration,

which has stimulated further research into the unique health implications of sport and leisure-time physical activity beyond that of the other domains (Howie et al., 2020).

These two lines of research in SfD from a public health perspective are underpinned by ongoing efforts to improve measurement and surveillance of physical activity and sport participation. Continued advances in technology have fueled innovative research in wearable devices for measuring movement, but this currently has limited reach in several population groups in the SfD field. There has also been a shift towards a more holistic approach to health globally, which has further opened public health research to concepts of social health and connections with the natural environment. This has been accompanied by an emerging focus on health and wellbeing (as opposed to disease and illbeing), which aligns with a strengths-based approach to SfD programming. It has also encouraged public health scholars to explore novel approaches to understanding the value of physical activity using economic models to estimate the social return on investment of physical activity and sport interventions (Keane et al., 2019).

Leisure

Leisure scholars have established themselves within the SfD research space by emphasizing the conceptualization of leisure as a positive youth development (PYD) intervention itself. Leisure has been discussed as a framework for meaning-making, identity development, sense of community, social justice, resistance, and oppression in the lives of youth through both structured and unstructured experiences. In this way, leisure research has broadened the scope of inquiry beyond sport as the impetus for development (although not excluding sport) and studied numerous leisure spaces in which youth development is centralized. This includes community centers, camps, outdoor spaces, hospitals/institutions, school-based and after-school programs, faith-based organizations, public recreation agencies, social media/electronic spaces, and arts/cultural spaces, among others (Bocarro et al., 2008; Kelly Pryor & Outley, 2014; Pinckney et al., 2020a).

Particularly commonplace in leisure research are connections between leisure experiences and psychosocial outcomes, including meaning-making (Hopper & Iwasaki, 2017), identity development (Kivel & Kleiber, 2000), and sense of community (Fader et al., 2020). As such, leisure research largely adopts positive psychological approaches, with PYD representing the dominant foundation in leisure-focused SfD scholarship. Yet, it is notable that descriptions of 'at-risk' youth (e.g., Hopper et al., 2019) and 'positive' leisure interventions to deter 'delinquent' leisure behavior

(e.g., Berdychevsky et al., 2022) also remain common in the leisure canon. More frequently, leisure research is questioning the role of the environment in the promotion of these youth development outcomes. Such scholarship has emphasized the role of program facilitation, organizational climate (Lower-Hoppe et al., 2020), and youth-adult relationships (Kelly Pryor & Outley, 2014; Price & Been, 2018) in facilitating positive youth outcomes, with particular evidence supporting youth-led leisure experiences in the promotion of personal and collective development (Hopper & Iwasaki, 2017; Hopper et al., 2019). Indeed, increased attention is being placed on the role of youth agency and youth cultural norms in promoting positive developmental outcomes. Interestingly, this has also led to the questioning of assumptions that positive development is not occurring unless it is intentionally structured programmatically—demonstrating the potential for positive outcomes to occur during unstructured leisure experiences. For example, McClelland and Giles (2014) found that youth experiencing homelessness used unstructured leisure activities to formulate close social connections amongst themselves and with members of mainstream society. Meanwhile, Sharpe and colleagues (2022) questioned assumptions that development is not occurring when we allow youth to 'just chill' and enact their own agency and personal leisure desires within community centers and leisure spaces.

One novel area of SfD scholarship that leisure research has championed is the centering of queerness in research paradigms and in the study of leisure in the lives of gender and sexual minority (GSM) youth. For example, Kivel's (1994) early pioneering work questioned the role of leisure in the personal and social development of GSM youth. Since then, many leisure scholars have furthered this line of inquiry, drawing attention to both oppressive systems in the lives of queer youth (Johnson, 1999) and the opportunities for queer youth to engage in identity affirmation and resistance to heteronormativity through leisure (Gillig et al., 2019; Theriault, 2014). Dykstra and Litwiller (2021) and Litwiller's (2021) emerging scholarship on the role of 'genderplay' in queering youth development is particularly salient in questioning heteronormative assumptions within youth development.

Relatedly, emerging lines of research in leisure are beginning to emphasize the social structuring of leisure spaces, organizations, experiences, and notions of PYD as reflective of dominant social hierarchies and hegemonic (e.g., white supremacist, heteronormative) cultural norms. Such scholarship has questioned whether leisure-based SfD reflects additional mechanisms of social control over youth instead of a critical, emancipatory lens (Anderson et al.,

2021). Thus, leisure scholars are increasingly adopting social justice, critical race, and queer paradigms to leisure-focused youth development research (Brown et al., 2018; Pinckney et al., 2020b; Theriault, 2019; Theriault & Mowatt, 2020).

The broad nature of leisure as both a philosophy and discipline provides a uniquely promising opportunity for transdisciplinary work. Indeed, leisure scholarship already draws heavily from the theories and methodologies commonplace in other disciplines. However, the ongoing challenges and limitations of leisure's approach to SfD, and indeed more broadly, are found in the integration of a leisure paradigm with other disciplines' theories. For example, it is common to find a sociological or psychological approach to the study of leisure spaces, but less common to find scholarship integrating leisure philosophies (Parr & Schmalz, 2019). As such, leisure is often discussed/implemented as an umbrella for a particular leisure space (i.e., recreation or sport), rather than a philosophy. Thus, leisure-based SfD scholarship will benefit from an intentional integration of leisure philosophy with other disciplinary approaches.

Sport Pedagogy

Sport pedagogy is closely intertwined with physical education pedagogy, with strong but often overlooked relevance to the SfD field (Rossi & Jeanes, 2016; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013; Spaaij et al., 2016). Sport pedagogy scholars study the ways educators (e.g., teachers, coaches) engage with learners (e.g., students, athletes) in the pursuit of educational and developmental aims. Questions in this discipline address a range of topics. Some are broad and open-ended, such as exploring the role of SfD in young people's lived experience (e.g., Jacobs & Wright, 2021). Others are as concrete and pragmatic as assessing the effectiveness of a professional development program for SfD coaches (e.g., Wright et al., 2016). Ultimately, sport pedagogy scholars contribute to the SfD field by examining the intersection of program aims, pedagogical processes, implementation, and learning experiences through positivist, post-positivist, and interpretivist approaches to research. Designs such as quasi-experimental, qualitative case study, mixed method program evaluation, and action research are common in sport pedagogy (Thomas et al., 2015).

Although mainstream pedagogical practices tend to be performance-based, content-centered, and teacher directed, some sport pedagogy scholars have championed more learner-centered, holistic, and democratic approaches. These pedagogical approaches are prominent in sport-based

youth development (SBYD; Petitpas et al., 2005) and social and emotional learning (SEL) in physical education (Wright & Richards, 2022), both of which have emerged as novel trends in SfD scholarship. Research in SBYD and SEL has indicated the need for holistic, youth-centered, and empowering programming, with positive motivational climates and pedagogical processes that foster developmental assets and teach transferable life skills (Hellison et al., 2000; Hemphill et al., 2019; Wright et al., 2019). In fact, recent review articles illustrate the groundswell of interest in ways sport and physical education pedagogy can foster positive affective responses (Teraoka et al., 2020), personal and social skills (Opstoel et al., 2020), and SEL competencies (Dyson et al., 2020).

The notion of models-based practice is driving much of this work, because it provides SfD programs with a framework for delineating educational aims, processes, structures, and pedagogical strategies. This clarity helps program leaders to train staff, support implementation fidelity, and develop logical and appropriate evaluation plans. Some leading field-tested pedagogical models include Sport Education, Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR), Cooperative Learning, Adventure-Based Learning, and Service-Learning. Among these, the feasibility and practical effectiveness of the TPSR model has already been demonstrated as a valuable framework for SfD programs (e.g., Whitley et al., 2017) and training approaches (e.g., Wright et al., 2016; 2018). As an example of what a coherent pedagogical model offers when integrated into an SfD program, TPSR is a well-defined but flexible teaching approach focused on democratic and empowering pedagogy (Hellison, 2011). It comes with validated methods for training staff and assessing implementation fidelity including systematic observation tools and implementation checklists (Wright et al., 2016, 2018) as well as validated customized surveys to assess students' enactment of program goals (e.g., personal and social skills) in the program (Li et al., 2008) and the transfer of that learning to other settings (Wright et al., 2019).

Emerging trends in the sport pedagogy literature include the transfer of life skills learned in SBYD programs and physical education settings (Gould & Carson, 2008; Hellison, 2011; Wright et al., 2019). Within this literature, scholars are beginning to identify specific pedagogical strategies that may support the cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes that foster life skills transfer through transformative learning experiences (Jacobs & Wright, 2018). Another emerging trend in the literature is the focus on more critical and emancipatory perspectives on topics such as social justice education, trauma-informed practice, restorative practice, and culturally responsive pedagogy

(Wright & Richards, 2022). These perspectives can foster more democratic and emancipatory learning environments in SfD programs in which local stakeholders are actively involved in identifying problems and generating solutions (Rossi & Jeanes, 2016; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013; Spaaij et al., 2016).

Sport pedagogy as discipline has much to offer the SfD field, but it does have limitations and challenges. Because this discipline has such a strong focus on educational and developmental experiences that occur inside a program, it often fails to address broader social, cultural, and organizational issues. Pedagogy scholars tend to keep their focus close to the ground and may therefore miss connections to broader factors such as local politics, social hierarchies, policy change, and organizational management. Such factors shape the reality of programs and can serve as barriers or facilitators to progress. Failure to recognize these contextual layers may limit a sport pedagogy scholar's ability to design, support, and/or interpret programs effectively. Working alongside collaborators with other disciplinary perspectives, a pedagogy scholar may be more likely to factor in the larger systems and influences that impact a program. This would make them better equipped to support culturally responsive pedagogy in context.

Sport Psychology

Many sport psychology scholars have embraced PYD as a lens for examining the developmental aspects of sport, from SfD programs to more traditional youth sport settings (i.e., school sport, club sport; Holt, 2016). PYD through sport should facilitate youth development through experiences and processes that result in the acquisition of transferable personal and social life skills (along with physical competencies; Holt et al., 2016). These skills and competencies are thought to enable youth to "thrive and contribute to their communities, both now and in the future" (Holt et al., 2016, p. 231).

With PYD as the dominant lens through which sport psychology scholars engage in SfD scholarship, common research questions center on the psychological, social, and emotional outcomes associated with youth sport participation, along with the development and transfer of life skills. Life skills research (e.g., Kendellen & Camiré, 2017) can be viewed as a specific and more focused approach that falls under the overall PYD umbrella. Additionally, sport psychology scholars examine the contextual features of PYD-based sport programs, hoping to enhance their understanding of which programs work, for whom, and under what circumstances. The majority of sport psychology PYD research has used qualitative approaches

(primarily interview-based studies) underpinned by interpretivist or constructionist paradigms. Researchers have also developed sport-specific questionnaires which have been used in cross-sectional studies to examine relations between psychosocial variables and PYD or life skills outcomes. Intervention research is rare in the sport psychology PYD domain.

To give a brief overview, early psychological research involved the application of PYD theories and models from developmental psychology. For example, Lerner and colleagues' (2011) 5Cs model offered a way of assessing psychosocial outcomes associated with sport participation (Jones et al., 2011), while Larson's domains of learning provided a way to assess young people's development (i.e., initiative, identity exploration, emotional learning, teamwork skills) in extracurricular activities (Hansen et al., 2003). The resulting Youth Experience Survey (Hansen et al., 2003) was later adapted to sport by MacDonald et al. (2012). Finally, Benson's (1997) developmental assets framework depicted 40 external (i.e., contextual) and internal (i.e., personal) assets that youth need for successful development, accentuating the role that community plays in PYD. Strachan et al. (2009) examined this framework within youth sport settings, concluding that positive identity, empowerment, and support were particularly pertinent.

Developmental psychology research drove some of the early theoretical developments in the PYD through sport literature as well (e.g., Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Gould & Carson, 2008; Petitpas et al., 2005). More recently, there has been a shift toward creating sport-specific theories of PYD underpinned by the burgeoning sport-specific literature. For example, Holt and colleagues (2017) presented a grounded theory of PYD through sport following a systematic review of qualitative research in this area. The resulting model of PYD through sport highlights specific PYD outcomes (in personal, social, and physical domains) that can be realized when a PYD climate is in place, with more explicit learning facilitated through intentional activities that help youth build and transfer life skills. Another model comes from Pierce and colleagues (2017), who outlined a sport-specific definition and model of life skills. Essentially, this model postulates that life skills transfer is an ongoing process as youth interact with and interpret their sport environments, ultimately producing positive or negative life skills transfer outcomes. A third sport-specific model of PYD within the sport psychology discipline is from Whitley and colleagues (2018), who described a systems theory of development through sport for youth who have experienced complex and developmental trauma and were raised in under-resourced communities. This systems theory identified four leverage points that send ripples throughout the system: (a) embodied physicality and competition, (b) change in youth-environment interactions, (c) developmentally-focused sport environment, and (d) positive community development. A common thread across all three models is the interaction between individuals and their social environments; these are the building blocks for understanding ways to promote positive developmental outcomes.

As the field of PYD through sport continues to mature, it is likely that more sophisticated studies will examine what features of PYD-based sport programs work, under what circumstances, and for whom (Bruner et al., 2021; Holt et al., 2013). Scholars have developed some important sport-specific measures of PYD, such as the Youth Experience Survey-Sport (MacDonald et al., 2012), the Life Skills Transfer Survey (Weiss et al., 2014), and the Life Skills Scale for Sport-Transfer Scale (Mossman et al., 2021). These measures will enable scholars to pursue a wider range of research projects, including intervention studies examining the effectiveness of sport-based PYD programs and longitudinal research evaluating the long-term impact of PYD through sport (Holt et al., 2020).

Intersections and Possibilities

This paper set out to critically review the current foci and research trends across different areas of SfD scholarship. Taken together, our reflective findings highlight a number of key issues and concerns, as well as opportunities for increased cross-disciplinary engagement—with a particular focus on transdisciplinary research.

First, there is a tendency toward staying within disciplinary boundaries, with lines of research developing that, at times, duplicate or obfuscate SfD research in other disciplines. For instance, there is extensive overlap between sport psychology and sport pedagogy scholars regarding their interest in life skill development and transfer. However, despite their common interests and approaches, the literature demonstrates a tendency for scholars in each area to 'stay in their own lane' rather than seek out opportunities to collaborate, share insights, or at least read the work of those outside of their field. Similarly, PYD is the lens through which leisure and sport psychology scholars study the developmental aspects of sport, yet these scholars rarely cross disciplinary lines in any substantive manner. Extending this example, PYD shares similarities (e.g., perspectives, theoretical influences) with the anthropological examination of youth in SfD, and yet these scholars tend to stay within disciplinary boundaries.

Another example comes in the form of the socio-ecological model, which is shared by several disciplines, but has been represented in multiple iterations with different nuances.

Remaining firmly embedded within one discipline can result in missed opportunities or gaps in the evidence base, which has unfolded in all disciplines represented in this paper. For example, sociological scholars, at times, overlook managerial implications of their work, while management scholars sometimes recommend programmatic changes without taking account of relations of power, the histories of inequity, or the ways in which both sport and development are socially constructed. Another exemplar comes from the public health discipline. Public health scholars were critiqued in the past for taking a deficit-approach to 'problem definition' and 'needs assessments' (Tobi et al., 2014), rather than the strengths-based approach emphasized in other disciplines. This resulted in a plethora of research examining the potential for SfD programs to "treat" disease and illbeing (e.g., heart disease, depression), but a relative paucity of investigation into the promotion of health and wellbeing outcomes (e.g., cardiovascular health, happiness). The shift towards leveraging the strengths within a community as a starting point for programs has direct implications for practitioners, particularly when engaging difficult-to-reach communities that may be further marginalized by only focusing on their challenges at the outset. In practice, it also ensures that programs delivered are aligned with development objectives that are already valued by the participating communities.

There are a number of explanations for this tendency to retreat to one's discipline (e.g., comfort, education, norms), but a contributing factor may be the colonialization of space within SfD scholarship. Specifically, each discipline may engage in, or support a culture of, protectionism built on notions of the "purest ideals" of what counts as evidence and what research is most valuable. This is not to say that scholars in different disciplines are not influenced or informed by one another, but that acknowledgements of other works and disciplines may happen in a non-collaborative or intradisciplinary way (e.g., pluralism in thought, insular in action). This means that even when the lines of connection across disciplines are understood, they are often not experienced, explored, or advanced in depth. This, in turn, may connect to deeper issues of identity within the SfD field and the evolving professionalization (or institutionalization) of the field, one in which scholars seek to justify not only SfD broadly, but their discipline's role within that field—as well as their own position as a scholar. Thus, SfD scholars tend to refer to scholarship within other disciplines as a means for setting up their own research and/or positioning their discipline within the broader SfD

landscape, but engaging in cross-disciplinary research is less common (especially transdisciplinarity, which requires the greatest integration). Traditional modes of publication—in which academic outlets exist largely within disciplinary silos and for which discipline-specific standards are expected or rewarded—likely only add further barriers to achieving transdisciplinary work, as do university norms around lines of research and disciplinary expertise related to promotion, tenure, and prestige. These barriers are real and, we would say, concerning, given that in its existence and practice, SfD is itself transdisciplinary, and therefore requiring of a research approach that is in line with this fact. Of course, there are significant examples of disciplinary influences and intersections in SfD that might serve as models or inspiration. The maturation of pedagogy research within SfD is in large part due to the integration of knowledge, theory, and practice from complementary disciplines. Specifically, the growing commitment among sport pedagogy scholars to addressing culturally relevant pedagogy, social justice, and other critical issues is influenced by sport sociologists, while pedagogical research with a strong focus on physical activity promotion connect with a public health perspective. Additionally, there has arguably been some overlap in SfD research between the sociological understandings of race, class, and gender and the psycho-social experiences of marginalized people, with sport psychology research being particularly useful in understanding individuals' experiences in SfD programs. From a conceptual perspective, a multidisciplinary contribution has recently been proposed by Schulenkorf and Siefken (2019). Their Sport-for-Health Model was developed as a flexible conceptual tool that establishes the nexus between sport management, health promotion, sociocultural development, policy, and sustainability. As such, it allows for scholarly engagement from a range of perspectives, including (but not limited to) public health, management, sociology, politics, psychology, and pedagogy.

Although multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships are not yet common, there are increasing instances of this cross-disciplinary work. For instance, Holt and colleagues examined the impact of a ball hockey SfD program from sport psychology and sport sociology perspectives, enabling the joint exploration of personal and social benefits along with structural constraints (e.g., economic and labor conditions) the participants were experiencing (Holt et al., 2013; Scherer et al., 2016). Another example comes from collaborations between management and sociology scholars, where fruitful partnerships have led to the joint examination of research questions and practical implications. For instance, sociological questions about the

socially and politically fraught nature of being an international volunteer in SfD have led to considerations of the managerial implications regarding how or whether an organization should send volunteers abroad. Another fruitful collaboration occurred between Collison and colleagues (2016), who embraced an interdisciplinary perspective in their cross-cultural comparative research study exploring multiple international SfD contexts. The research was shaped by the disciplinary make-up and expertise of the research team, utilizing multiple approaches and influences from anthropology and sociology. The result was a process of learning and unlearning, in order to apply a variety of participatory fieldwork approaches to engage (differently but with the same objective) in the ethnographic fieldwork process. The practical implications of this interdisciplinary approach were significant, both for the research outcomes and the expansion of researcher knowledge and skills. In particular, the research process and findings were able to influence and inform multiple audiences and stakeholders at the policy level and within intervention spaces. This included the empowerment of participants and young leaders to share their knowledge and influence future directions.

Another example of an interdisciplinary team at Northern Illinois University brought together faculty from sport pedagogy, sport psychology, sport management, and athletic training to design, deliver, evaluate, and publish findings from two-way exchange SfD training programs for sport coaches in Belize (Wright et al., 2016). Not only did the faculty from different disciplines come together in this ongoing project (currently in its eighth year), they involved graduate and undergraduate students in learning about working on a multidisciplinary team in partnership with local stakeholders (Jacobs et al., 2020). These are a few examples of the growing number of dynamic and diverse research teams in SfD (e.g., Football 4 Peace; Schulenkorf et al., 2014), though there still seems to be uncertainty about the entry point, fear of crossing disciplinary lines, and even protection of disciplinary expertise.

Recognizing this, we suggest that the SfD field could learn from norms within the social sciences more broadly, based on networks of influence and information sharing. In particular, sociology, psychology, and anthropology all share common theoretical influences but offer differing methodological commitments, entry points into contexts, and conceptualizations of evidence in various interpretative, constructivist, and positivist ways. The question is, how can SfD scholars commit to this type of transdisciplinary approach?

One entry point could be to explore the connection that

scholars share regarding the commitment to (or seduction of) sport as a mechanism for change within diverse contexts and phenomena. Another entry point should be the transdisciplinary nature of SfD, requiring a holistic approach to SfD research. The evidence base in SfD is to the point where an exclusive or bordered approach to SfD research is limiting (Darnell et al., 2016; Massey & Whitley, 2019). Instead, diverse conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological tendencies should be viewed as building blocks rather than obstacles, and different conceptualizations of evidence should be explored rather than overlooked. Ultimately, a shared commitment to SfD, an appreciation for diverse disciplinary perspectives, and an interest in closing in on the gestalt of SfD should soften the ground for transdisciplinary research. For example, sport management scholars have enlightened the SfD landscape with accounts of SfD impacts and theories of change, with these accounts often packaged in a neat, well-structured, and well-defined recollection of operational processes and relationships. It is the "neatness" sport management provides that then creates the context for anthropologists to explore the "messiness" of social process, cultures, sport, and development. In collaboration, anthropologists and sport management scholars could highlight the multi-realities and messiness while seeking the straight lines to translate to the SfD field more broadly. Within the context of SfD practice, this is very helpful, as practitioners can apply contextually grounded theory of change methodologies in the knowledge that local specificity can work within rigid frameworks for positive outcomes in context appropriate ways.

Although transdisciplinary research fully integrates disciplinary perspectives, this does not need to be the first step into cross-disciplinary research. The degree of integration steadily increases as researchers shift from multidisciplinarity to interdisciplinarity to transdisciplinarity, with blurred lines between these categories, and so it may be prudent to begin with multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research (Adler & Stewart, 2010; Stokols et al., 2013). These collaborations and partnerships can facilitate honest, reflective, and constructive discussions and contributions about SfD research within and across disciplines, deconstructing borders that have been drawn within a transdisciplinary field. This could include efforts to harmonize language and terminology in the SfD field, which would also reduce duplication in effort and enhance sharing and learning across disciplines. Additionally, scholarly collaborations could demonstrate impact on a broader range of measures for the complex constructs that SfD programs aim to address. For example, public health scholars have the capacity to support other disciplines in establishing

'causation' through various study designs and mixed methods approaches, along with guidance in measurement development for complex constructs that have not been well quantified historically (e.g., subjective wellbeing, physical activity participation). This would broaden the scope for practitioners to demonstrate the impact of their programs on a broad range of development outcomes in ways not previously defined. Additionally, public health scholars could collaborate with scholars from other disciplines to further develop novel qualitative methods and constructs within the SfD sector. For instance, leisure scholars have broadened the scope of leisure inquiry beyond the construct of 'time' common in public health inquiry (i.e., leisure-time), emphasizing instead the nuanced psycho-social components to leisure. This may have critical practical implications by opening up the relatively rigid approach to study design and construct development within the public health discipline that has historically emphasized causation. Ideally, these multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships would lead to transdisciplinary research teams conducting collective research that is holistic, representing diverse conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological approaches. These transdisciplinary research teams could then explore more complex and meaningful research questions (Massey & Whitley, 2019), such as the ways in which PYD aligns or contrasts with the dominant and transformative approaches within the SfD paradigm (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). Again, the benefits of this would be SfD practice that is connected to a program theory or theory of change, and strives to work with participants to challenge or transform social conditions, rather than teaching participants to survive amidst inequity. Another research question that would benefit from a transdisciplinary approach is the push-pull between the value of structured, adult-led programming compared with unstructured, youth-led experiences (Bowers & Green, 2013). Both of these research questions open up the possibility of transdisciplinary teams working towards a better understanding of (and stronger evidence for) how SfD programs reach certain outcomes (i.e., the 'magical black box'; Coalter, 2007) – particularly those that have been hard to measure historically (i.e., 'soft' outcomes).

Transdisciplinary research teams could also facilitate a systems approach to SfD research (Stokols et al., 2013), with "the study of multiple systems levels (e.g., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem), across various levels of influence (e.g., individual, school, community, policy) and influencers (e.g., parents, peers, youth workers, funders, governments, corporations), and the interaction of these factors over time and within an historical context" (Massey & Whitley, 2019, p. 181). This

approach recognizes that SfD programs are not operating within linear, organized confines but are actually enmeshed in a dynamic, messy, interconnected world (Burns & Worsley, 2015). Rather than studying SfD with a reductionist approach, where scholars dissect complexity into manageable—and often discipline-specific—parts, transdisciplinary research teams taking a systems approach would embrace this complexity, seeking to understand the whole and the parts concurrently (i.e., synthesis).

Additionally, systems thinking creates the potential for these teams to approach research as a strategic asset in partnership with SfD programs, participants, policymakers, funders, and other stakeholders, rather than an after-thought. This type of collaboration should begin with careful consideration of who is involved at all stages of the research process, from local voices and Indigenous scholars to youth voices and program staff—and the programmatic and epistemological assumptions therein (Nicholls et al., 2011; Schulenkorf & Spaaij, 2015). This aligns with one conceptualization of transdisciplinary research, which requires active and meaningful engagement with non-academic partners (Pineo et al., 2021; Stokols et al., 2013). Through this engagement, transdisciplinary research teams can facilitate comprehensive systems mapping, which builds on the existing socio-ecological model and identifies leverage points for optimizing the reach and impact of SfD programs (Burns & Worsley, 2015). Systems mapping can also ascertain feedback loops, upstream influences, and downstream patterns affecting SfD programs, whether they be historical, structural, community, and/or individual. This, in turn, would enhance understandings of causality within dynamic and constantly evolving systems. Ultimately, this could also facilitate more intentionality around practical and policy implications from research, such as taking theories, data, and critiques and integrating and operationalizing them into different and better policies, programs, and outcomes. For example, robust and holistic system understandings of how and why sport contributes to meeting development goals (or not) can be integrated into theoretical insights that can be applied to subsequent cases and contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the above discussion in mind, in this section, we—a multidisciplinary writing team—propose a set of specific, actionable takeaways that can support more collaborations and partnerships across the SfD field. In so doing, we recognize the need for progressive phases of change at multiple levels of influence (i.e., individuals, journals, universities, funders, etc.), but nonetheless we aim to offer a framework for responding to the systemic and seemingly

intractable nature of siloing in SfD. Below are some early-phase actions that could enable more collaborations and partnerships, perhaps sending ripples throughout the SfD field that might make transdisciplinary research (and subsequent practice and policymaking) more likely. First, there is a need for safe, supportive spaces where honest, reflective, and constructive discussions on SfD research within and across disciplines can unfold (i.e., communities of practice). These forums could look and be different and diverse in nature, and include weekly or monthly sessions among graduate students, early career scholars, and/or more advanced scholars that focus on specific projects or topics. From a practical SfD perspective, first steps have already been taken. For instance, together with key partners, the International Platform on Sport and Development (sportanddev.org) has organized a number of webinars on contemporary SfD topics—including sport for refugees—that have included a diverse group of practitioners, scholars, and policymakers. Building on such initiatives, the research community could, for instance, conduct an SfD conference that focuses on key societal issues and in doing so, examine and deconstruct disciplinary borders. As a writing team, our promise is to organize one session in the next year which centers transdisciplinary research within SfD, with a global call to scholars to join this discussion. There will be particular focus on surfacing barriers, brainstorming solutions, sharing ideas, and exploring possibilities as a global community of scholars. Ultimately, we hope to cultivate a community where we can be more generous with our knowledge as we explore transdisciplinary research together, widening (or even transcending) the scope of our individual disciplines.

Second, finding outlets for publication of transdisciplinary work can be a challenge. Although there is some evidence of openness towards accepting and valuing transdisciplinary perspectives, this is largely shaped by individual editorial preference as well as influence. It has been our experience that high-quality cross-disciplinary research finds a home even in traditional journals if it is indeed recognized as more robust and complete, and therefore 'better' research. To encourage a collective shift across the publishing landscape, there is a need to re-envision norms such that collaborative and collective work (and the scholars producing this work) receive greater support. For example, when receiving a paper that crosses disciplinary lines or uses an unfamiliar writing style, journal editors and reviewers could consider the broader contributions to the SfD knowledge base and the benefits of shared learning, rather than the knee-jerk reaction we sometimes have in feeling overly rigid or protective of our disciplinary spaces. It may even be prudent for journals to create a new submission category that welcomes cross-disciplinary work,

or perhaps an award for research that transcends disciplinary boundaries, thereby facilitating conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological innovations that advance the SfD field. Another consideration for journals may be the benefits of single blind or open peer review processes. Might these encourage a more transparent and, quite frankly, kinder review process, particularly for early career scholars and/or those seeking to cross, merge, or deconstruct disciplinary lines? Another possibility, to which we will commit as a writing team (and individually), is to identify key points during a research project when intentional reflections and discussions are held about the disciplinary boundaries, cross-disciplinary influences, and interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary possibilities. This does not mean that every research question requires a cross-disciplinary approach, but there should be thoughtful consideration of the most suitable approach. Such reflections promise to be rich and insightful; at times, they may even present a starting point for new or extended research around a particular topic or phenomenon. This scholarly engagement could (and should) begin during the project ideation phase, but may well continue throughout data collection and into data analysis. From a communications perspective, we propose that these procedural steps should be clearly outlined in the methodology section of academic papers, as a valuable and necessary part of any transparent SfD study.

Third, we are aware that collaborations, partnerships, and teams take time to develop, with relationships and trust at the heart of this type of work. This can present a barrier to those who are limited by time (e.g., university or familial responsibilities, need to publish quickly to earn tenure), resources (e.g., access to technology and reliable internet), and knowledge (e.g., minimal guidance on cross-disciplinary research). Given these challenges, we must consider steps we can all take to build relationships with emerging and established scholars in other disciplines, along with pathways where emerging scholars can cultivate relationships and seek opportunities for collaboration with one another. For example, established scholars with students interested in SfD research could organize meetings with research teams in other disciplines, with a focus on building connections, sharing knowledge, and exploring opportunities for collaboration. There could also be a type of informal mentorship, where scholars meet with students from other disciplines to share their perspectives and experiences studying SfD. This focus on relationships and knowledge exchange sets the stage for collaborative and collective work, although there is still limited guidance on cross-disciplinary research in the SfD field. With this in mind, our commitment, as a writing team, is to envision and then activate a transdisciplinary research project that will

benefit the field, detailing each step we take to allow others to learn from our experiences. Finally, we must recognize the benefits of building transdisciplinary research teams that include non-academic partners. Stokols and colleagues (2013) identified this as a key demarcation between interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, with transdisciplinary research teams engaging scholars and practitioners to "work collaboratively at the nexus of their knowledge domains" (p. 4). These collaborations and partnerships are more likely to explore relevant and meaningful research questions, enabling the creation and/or adaptation of programs and policies that are innovative, evidence-based, and feasible. To do this, scholars should consider the inclusion of non-academic partners throughout the research process, from ideation, design, and funding to data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Additionally, funders could create—and scholars could identify—funding streams that are established for research teams that engage scholars, practitioners, and other stakeholders (e.g., policymakers) as joint investigators. As a writing team, we are committed to identifying existing funding streams for this type of collaborative work, and plan to seek funding for our transdisciplinary research project. This will allow us to map the funding landscape for this type of transdisciplinary work, test relevant funding streams, and (indirectly) promote any successful funding sources.

CONCLUSION

The nature of academia steers us to affiliate ourselves with a particular discipline. A strength in this model is that we tend to become steeped in the literature on a certain topic, developing expertise and precision in articulating and examining very specific issues. However, as we develop this deep but narrow focus, we become accustomed to wearing blinders (i.e., blinkers). We forget that these disciplines, theories, and questions we ask are constructed and somewhat arbitrary. As a whole tapestry, we are taking a very comprehensive look at SfD and generating great insights, but often in isolation (i.e., silos). We easily forget that we are only seeing one angle, asking a fairly narrow set of questions, and usually communicating our insights only with people wearing matching blinders. This fragmented approach is not how people, programs, or communities work. They are complex, dynamic, and integrated. Each discipline represented here, and others that are not, have great contributions to make, yet each of us holds just one piece of the jigsaw puzzle. This does not necessarily mean we need to hold more pieces, but there are benefits to working with colleagues who contribute their pieces to the puzzle. In other words, as a scholarly community, we will benefit from understanding the conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological approaches of the

different disciplines. Such a transdisciplinary approach

allows us all to work from our strengths, yet see how our strengths fit into the whole. Developing this broader perspective and a greater degree of collaboration can only enhance this synergy, making our collective contributions to people, programs, and communities even stronger. Perhaps this may also lead to increased recognition of the SfD field in and of itself, rather than as a sub-discipline buried in numerous disciplinary siloes.

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Original Research

Improving adult women's emotional health in rural Kenya through community soccer and the role of social support: A mixed-methods analysis

Francis Barchi[1], Millan A. AbiNader[2], Samantha C. Winter[3], Lena M. Obara[1], Daniel Mbogo[4], Bendettah M. Thomas[5], & Brittany Ammerman[6]

[1] Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, USA
[2] University of Pennsylvania, USA
[3] Columbia University, USA
[4] Village Voices, Kenya
[5] Nikumbuke Project, Kenya
[6] Hospital for Special Surgery, USA

Corresponding author email: francis.barchi@rutgers.edu

ABSTRACT

This study examines the contribution of a recreational adult women's soccer league in rural Kenya to the development goals of enhancing social support, building community cohesion, and improving women's emotional health. Using a sequential explanatory mixed methods approach, 702 members of a women's health and literacy program, 229 of whom played in the program's soccer league, completed surveys about various aspects of their lives. A five-item scale, perceived support from friends (PSF), queried women's access to emotional and instrumental support; an exploratory factor analysis confirmed this scale's suitability as a single measure. Bivariate and multivariate analyses examined attributes associated with PSF. Based on these findings, a purposive sample of 229 soccer league members participated in focus group discussions. Women's perceptions were examined using thematic analysis. Quantitative findings indicated that soccer league members had greater odds of reporting high social support than their non-soccer-playing peers. Qualitative findings from the final analysis sample of 201 women suggested that soccer provided a social space in which team members formed a network of friendships within and across villages, providing emotional and instrumental support they associated with decreased stress and improved well-being. Given the positive effects of soccer on adult women's lives, similar programs, particularly in rural settings with limited resources, should be considered as development strategies.

Sport-for-development theory suggests that sports are an effective international development tool that improves public health, enhances socialization, promotes inclusion of those who are disadvantaged, and contributes to the economic development of communities (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). Social change theories suggest that participation in sports stimulates change at the individual, cultural, and societal levels—empowering otherwise marginalized, at risk-youth, promoting gender equity, giving women voice, and empowering women to assume a greater role in the home, community, and political economy (Hancock et al., 2013; Huggins & Randell, 2007; Lyras & Hums, 2009; Meier, 2000; Ottesen et al., 2010). The notion of "football for good" is reflected in such global sports initiatives as streetfootballworld (https://www.streetfootball world.org), WomenWin (https://www.womenwin.org) and FFA Global (https://www.ffaglobal.org) which empower young people through soccer's capacity to foster inclusion and enhance self-efficacy.

Research on sport-for-development programming for women and girls in Sub-Saharan Africa has largely focused

on youth programs (Akindes & Kirwin, 2009; Jeanes, 2013; Richards & Foster, 2013). Several sports programs for adolescent girls in Kenya have shown that team sports can have psychosocial benefits, offering both safe places in which girls can build greater confidence and self-efficacy as well as social spaces in which to form friendships and social networks (Brady, 2005; Brady & Khan, 2002; Forde, 2009; Uweza Foundation, n.d.). Although these studies provide an evidence base to support sport-for-development initiatives, recreational team sports have yet to be adopted in the region as a strategy to improve the lives of adult women, particularly those living in rural communities. The establishment of a community soccer league for adult women by the Nikumbuke Project in southeastern Kenya in 2014 provided a unique opportunity to carry out empirical research on the value of such initiatives as social development strategies, and is the focus of the current study. Our interest in the present study was to examine the ways in which the league has contributed to the Nikumbuke Project's development goals of enhancing women's sense of social support, building community cohesion, and improving women's emotional health and sense of well-being.

Social Support and Emotional Health

Social support, one's perception of belonging to a mutually beneficial network of people in which one is cared about and valued, is widely recognized as a social determinant of health, and is linked to numerous positive mental and physical health effects in studies across populations and disease conditions (Berkman & Glass, 2000; Harandi et al., 2017; Taylor, 2011; Wang et al., 2018; WHO, 2003). Social support has been found to be positively associated with emotional well-being and quality of life in various populations, including adolescents (Noret et al., 2020; Weber et al., 2010), persons living with HIV (Chandran et al., 2019; McDowell & Serovich, 2007); and caregivers (del-Pino-Casado, 2018; Ong et al., 2018). In Sub-Saharan Africa, scholars have found social support to be a significant factor in predicting depression (Breet et al., 2014; Osborn et al., 2020) and emotional well-being (Gyasi, 2019). Social support has been shown to have a moderating effect on the relationship between mental health and food insecurity (Na, 2018; Tsai, 2016) and to promote psychological resilience and reduce depression in HIV-positive populations (Kalomo, 2018; Machisa, 2018).

Social support has been identified as both a correlate and a causal contributor to well-being (Cobb, 1976; Cohen & Syme, 1985). A number of different perspectives on the pathways linking social support and health have been suggested by scholars (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). The access

to emotional and instrumental support may influence health indirectly by reducing causes of stress or by motivating individuals to adopt healthier behaviors (Bloom, 1990). Other scholars suggest that social support may exert a direct effect on physiological processes, increasing an individual's ability to fend off disease (Berkman & Glass, 2000; Uchino, 2006). Of particular relevance to the current research is the Stress and Coping Perspective, which posits that the supportive actions of others, and beliefs in the availability of such support when needed, can themselves reduce the effects of stressful events on health (Lazarus, 1966). This may be the direct result of one's perception that he or she has access to interpersonal resources should a stressful event occur or the buffering effects of social support on the level of stress that an event can cause (Cohen & Wills, 1985). This buffering effect has been found to be most effective at reducing stress when one shares a social identity with the source of the social support (Frisch et al., 2014; McKimmie et al., 2020).

Study Aims

Previously published work by the authors reported that adult women's participation in the league was associated with reduced experiences of physical violence and positive self-reported health status (Barchi et al., 2021, 2022). Women credited soccer with less pain, reduced worry, and greater strength and energy. Although some of these outcomes may have been the result of increased aerobic exercise, the considerable body of literature linking sports and social support suggests that the social aspects of the league, both at the team- and community- levels, may have contributed to women's improved sense of well-being, and therefore warranted further examination. We hypothesized that: (a) women who participate in the soccer league would have greater perceived social support from friends than their peers who do not, (b) the social nature of a team sport would contribute to self-reported lower stress and improved well-being, and (c) that the adult women's soccer league was a valuable social development tool in this setting.

METHODS

The study used a sequential explanatory mixed methods approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) to assess levels of perceived social support from friends among women in southeastern rural Kenya and to gain an understanding of the ways in which participation in an adult women's soccer league may enhance social support, reduce stress, and improve well-being in this setting. An extensive literature supports the use of mixed methods in instances in which neither quantitative nor qualitative methods alone may adequately capture the trends and details of particular

phenomena (e.g., Ivankova et al., 2006; Johnson et al., 2007). The sequential explanatory mixed methods approach used in this study was quantitative-dominant, enabling the study team to use quantitative methods to assess levels of social support among community members and identify significant correlates before specifying the sample and the research questions to be used in the follow-on qualitative phase (see Figure 1). Sport-for-development and social cognitive theories relating to social support provided the conceptual framework for the development of questions in both phases of the study and in the interpretation of findings. Final survey and focus group script content was further guided by the prior field experience of the research team, which included Kenyan nationals with research experience in this setting, researchers with expertise in qualitative methods, and individuals with direct involvement in the formation of the soccer league. The study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University and by the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) in Nairobi, Kenya.

migration to more urban areas (County Government of Kwale, 2018). A Kenyan NGO, The Nikumbuke Project, was established in Lunga Lunga as a development initiative to enhance women's social capital and promote gender equality. Supported by the Swedish nonprofit, From One to Another, and the US-based Health by Motorbike, the Nikumbuke Project provides basic literacy training and health education for its adult female members and school-fee subsidies for their daughters. In addition to these core activities, the NGO offers a training program in tailoring for women who did not complete secondary school and workshops on family planning, gender-based violence, and sexual and reproductive health; the organization has encouraged the construction of town halls in each community as sites for regular meetings of its Nikumbuke members and other local activities, and has worked with communities to install water tanks in areas where access to water is limited. At the time of this study, the Nikumbuke Project was operational in 10 communities that represent a diversity of religions (Catholic, Muslim, traditional, and
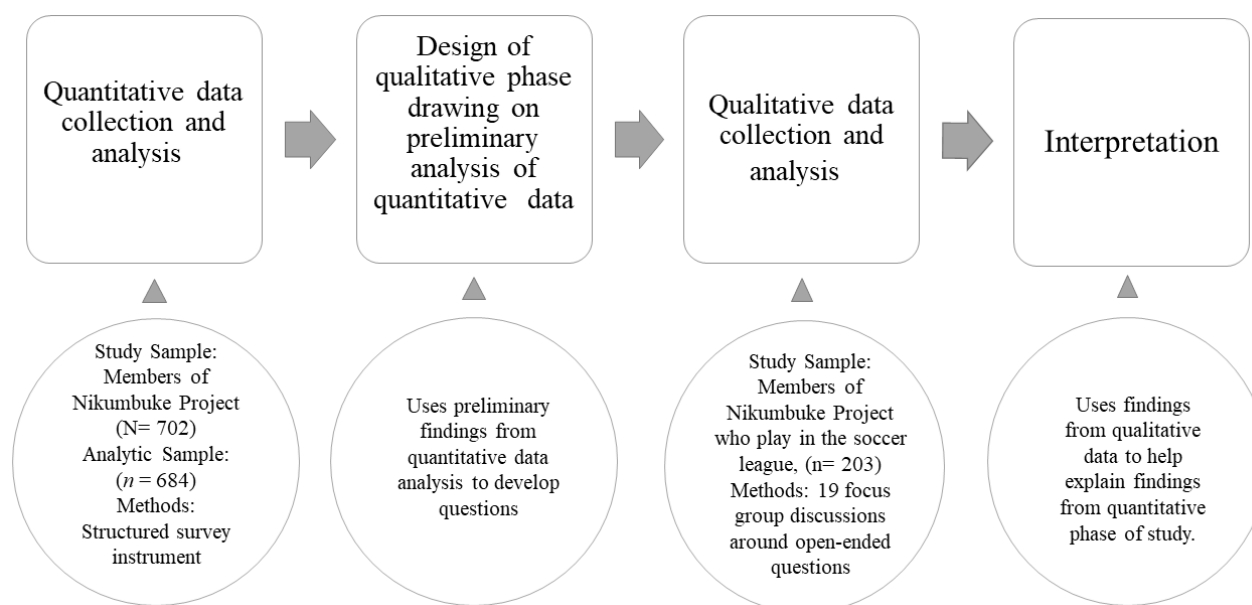
Figure 1. The sequential explanatory mixed methods approach

Setting

The study took place in 2018-2019 in Lunga Lunga, a sub-county of Kwale County in the Coast Region of southeastern Kenya. Located on the border with Tanzania, the sub-county is semi-arid, susceptible to extreme drought and flooding, and characterized by limited formal systems of transportation, communication, and financial markets. There are high rates of food insecurity, poverty, and unemployment in the population; many people survive on subsistence farming and herding, income generated through work in the informal sector, and remits from labor

other) and tribal groups living in seven settled villages, a Maasai pastoralist community, a mixed pastoralist/settled village, and Lunga Lunga, a market town and the seat of the sub-county in which these communities are located. Tribal and ethnic identities are important in Kenya, and communities in this study are generally organized around these attributes. The communities are spread across the sub-county and several are located as far away as 40 kilometers from the Nikumbuke headquarters. Although several villages are situated along the paved roadway used for

transporting goods between Kenya's major port city, Mombasa, and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the south, most roads within and between villages are unimproved paths. Residents commonly travel between villages on foot or by motorbike, and paths can become impassable during the rainy seasons for all but foot traffic.

In 2012, an American varsity athlete who was part of a six-week university study abroad program affiliated with the Nikumbuke Project decided to play pick-up soccer with the local children as part of her exercise regimen. To everyone's surprise, the women members of the Project, some of whom had either played soccer as students themselves or had children currently playing soccer in school, enthusiastically joined in. Later that year, the Nikumbuke Project membership requested that it be given the opportunity to start its own soccer league. Believing that such a league would contribute to its health and wellness goals, the Project leadership asked the same American student for assistance in setting up the new league. In 2014, she established a US-based nonprofit, the Nikumbuke Soccer League, to offer guidance and support for an all-women's adult recreational soccer league, the first of its kind in Kenya. In 2019, at the time of the study, each of the ten villages in the Nikumbuke Project hosted a team of 22-23 players selected by the Nikumbuke members in that village.

Quantitative Phase

A semi-structured survey instrument was used to collect cross-sectional data in the quantitative phase of the study. It contained questions relating to demographics, health, gender norms, soccer participation, and access to social support. Before the survey launch, members of the research team attended a regular meeting of each village group to introduce the study and develop a contact list for follow-up recruitment. Prior to the start of data collection, project members in each community were asked to nominate individuals to serve as a member of the local data collection team. From these nominees, the study team assembled a team of women who were able to read and write and were fluent in Swahili; many of them had experience serving as "teachers" in the Project's regular literacy programs. They participated in a week-long training program in research ethics and survey techniques run by the study team and practiced both consent procedures and survey administration using role-play exercises. Data collectors received a small stipend for successfully completing their training (500 Kenyan shillings [KES]—approximately $5 in U.S. dollars) and for each survey they administered (300 KES). The contact list created at the introductory meetings in each community was used by the study team to schedule

individual visits with women who were interested in participating. Women who agreed to participate in the survey were also given a small compensation (200 KES). The surveys took between 35-65 minutes to complete and were administered by the local data collectors in a private setting, quiet corners of the village halls, or respondents' homes. Surveys were checked by members of the study team at the end of each day to flag any methodological errors and to identify any data collectors who might be having difficulty with aspects of survey administration. Although available in both English and Kiswahili (the official languages of Kenya), the majority of surveys were administered in Kiswahili. Data collectors in the two communities that were home to Maasai were also able to translate questions verbally into Maa (the language of the Maasai people) as needed. Two members of the study team who live in Kenya and are fluent in Kiswahili and English, moved among the ten communities at the beginning of and throughout data collection and were available to answer questions, review completed surveys, and provide guidance where needed.

Sample

All 702 women who were members of the Nikumbuke Project, including members who played soccer in the league (229) as well as those who did not (473), were invited to participate in the quantitative portion of the study, and there were no refusals recorded. To be eligible, members had to be 18 years or older and able to provide verbal informed consent. The local data collectors, who had completed the surveys as part of their training, were excluded from the final sample of 684 women.

Measures

The outcome variable of interest was perceived social support from friends (PSF), measured by women's responses to five questions about their perceived ability to access different kinds of support from friends when needed: emotional support, food, money, shelter, and someone with whom to talk about important matters. Responses to each item were recorded on a three-level Likert scale reflecting agree, partially agree, or disagree. Women were asked whether they participated in other groups besides the Nikumbuke Project, and to indicate their level of agreement with two additional questions: "most of my friends come from my village/community", and "I have friends in other villages/communities". Women were also asked to indicate, using a five-point scale ranging from none of the time to all of the time, the frequency in the past four weeks in which emotional or physical health had interfered with social activities. Sociodemographic measures were also included

to record age, number of children, relationship status, education, village of residence, and household headship. Based on reported village of residence, a variable type of village was created to indicate whether the respondent resided in the pastoralist community, a settled village, the mixed pastoralist/settled community, or the market town.

Analysis Plan

Data analyses were conducted using StataCorp statistical software, Release 16 (StataCorp, 2019). An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to determine if the five separate questions relating to whether a woman had friends on whom she could rely for various resources could be used as a single measure of perceived support from friends (PSF). For this purpose, listwise deletion was used to eliminate those respondents for whom responses to one or more of the five support questions were missing; this resulted in an EFA-analytic sample of 673 respondents. The sample was found to meet the threshold for factor analysis as recommended by Hair et al. (1998), with an average inter-item correlation of .37, Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy of 0.75, and significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi 2$ (10, n=673) = 744.23, p < .001). Principle components analysis revealed only one factor with an eigenvalue greater than one, suggesting a simple structure with all five items loading strongly onto that factor. This factor explained 50% of the variance with factor loadings from .65 to .79. The five-item scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75. (see Table 1).

bivariate relationships between level of perceived social support, participation in the soccer league, and sociodemographic attributes.

Two multivariate regression models were used to examine the relationship between women's PSF and their participation in soccer. The first was a linear model containing the continuous variable PSF, with values ranging from 1 to 15 as the dependent variable; the second used a dichotomous variable indicating social support that fell either above the mean/at or below the mean. An item non-response analysis of the sample surveys indicated minimal missing data on all variables less than 5% except for age (9.5%). Missingness among the five items comprising the PSF scale ranged from 0.29% to 1.2%. For the regression analyses, multiple imputation was used to approximate missing data for all variables included in the model. Values for age were not imputed given the large percentage of missing values (9.5%), nor was age, given its lack of statistical significance at the bivariate level with perceived social support, included in the multivariate models. Variance inflation factors (VIF) for all variables included in the models were less than 1.5, well below the generally accepted threshold indicating multicollinearity (Hair et al., 1998). The strength and direction of the relationships between the independent and the dependent variables were similar in both the linear and logistic regression models. As many of the independent variables were categorical, the logistic regression model was somewhat easier to interpret and those findings are reported here.

Table 1. Items included in 'perceived support from friends' (PSF) scale*

Statements	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	Alpha
I have friends that I can talk to about important things.	682	1.72	.63	0.71
I have friends on whom I can count for emotional support.	681	1.76	.56	0.70
I have friends who can give me food if I need it.	680	1.55	.76	0.68
I have friends who can lend me money if I need it.	677	1.53	.76	0.69
I have friends who will give me shelter if I need to leave my household.	681	1.05	.93	0.73
Test scale				0.75

* Possible values of responses for individual items ranges from 0 to 2, with 2=Agree, 1=Partially agree, and 0 = Disagree.

Each item had a value ranging from 0 to 2; the scale was scored as a summed total of the values for all five items. For bivariate and multivariate analyses, a binary variable perceived social support was created to reflect whether respondent scores on the PSF scale were lower than/equal to or higher than the mean score of the sample. Frequencies were computed for all study variables. Separate Pearson's chi-square tests of independence were run to explore

Qualitative Phase

The qualitative phase took place five months after collection and preliminary analysis of the quantitative data. Exploratory sequential mixed methods research utilizes findings from an initial quantitative phase to shape the design, sample, and questions that will comprise a follow-on qualitative phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study,

Table 2. Odds Ratios (and 95% confidence intervals) from logistic regression analyses predicting the effects of various attributes on the likelihood that women will report higher perceived social support scores than the sample mean (n=684)[1]

	OR	p	95% CI
Soccer team participation (*ref.* Not part of soccer program)	1.98	<.001	1.36, 2.87
Type of community (*ref.* Pastoralist)			
Mixed (Pastoralist/Settled)	0.38	.024	0.16, 0.88
Settled village	0.35	.002	0.18, 0.68
Market town	0.45	.060	0.20.1.04
Children (*continuous variable*)	1.03	.397	0.96, 1.12
Relationship status (*ref.* Married)			
Partnered, but not married	1.11	.810	0.49, 2.51
Not in a relationship	1.54	.117	0.90, 2.64
Most friends come from my village/community. (*ref.* Disagree)			
Partially agree	1.70	.132	0.85,3.42
Agree	3.28	<.001	1.85, 5.80
I have friends that live in other villages/communities. (*ref.* Disagree)			
Partially agree	1.92	.201	0.71, 5.26
Agree	5.32	<.001	2.50, 11.33
Education (*ref.* No formal education)			
Some primary school	0.89	.615	0.57, 1.39
Completed primary school	0.73	.243	0.43, 1.24
Some secondary school	0.79	.653	0.28, 2.21
Completed secondary or higher	1.35	.416	0.66, 2.77
Head of household (*ref.* Not self)			
Self	0.81	.323	0.52, 1.24
Regular attendance at groups other than Nikumbuke (*ref.* No)			
Yes	0.74	.141	0.49, 1.11
Frequency in the past four weeks in which emotional or physical health has interfered with social activities (*ref.* None of the time)			
A little of the time	1.09	,666	0.74, 1.61
Some of the time	0.77	.371	0.43, 1.37
Most of the time	0.52	.038	0.28, 0.96
All of the time	1.66	.194	0.77, 3.55

[1] Includes imputed values

the quantitative data suggested a significant relationship between women's participation in the soccer league and high social support (see Table 2). To explore this relationship further, the qualitative phase of the study involved a purposeful sample that included only women from the Nikumbuke Project who played in the soccer league.

All members of the soccer league (N = 229) were invited to participate in the focus group discussions (FGDs), which were facilitated in Kiswahili by the third and fourth authors. At the start of each FGD, the facilitators explained the purpose of the FGD, how the session would be organized, and asked for women's oral consent to participate and be video recorded for the purpose of transcription. Each participant received a modest compensation of 100 KES for their time. Although the FGDs were to be facilitated primarily by the study team, it was decided that Nikumbuke members who had served as data collectors during the quantitative phase of the study would benefit from the

opportunity to receive training, assist in the coordination of the discussions and, where needed, translate into the Maasai language. Training sessions were held to review study goals and objectives, ethical issues relating to focus groups, and qualitative data collection. Trainees received a stipend of 300 KES for successful completion of the qualitative training program and for their participation in focus-group facilitation.

Two focus-group discussions of 10-13 players each took place in each of the ten Nikumbuke communities to allow all members in that community's soccer team the opportunity to participate without the FDGs becoming unwieldy. Each FGD lasted approximately 90 minutes. Sessions followed a script containing open-ended questions about women's motivations in joining the soccer league and the ways in which playing on the team had affected their general health, their relationships, and their roles in the community. Eighteen of the sessions were conducted in Kiswahili and two in the Maasai language.

Video recordings of sessions conducted in Kiswahili were first transcribed into Kiswahili and subsequently translated into English by a transcription service in Nairobi. Video recordings of the two sessions conducted in Maa were simultaneously transcribed and translated directly into English by a language instructor in Nairobi fluent in Maa, Kiswahili, and English. An error in videotaping during two of the focus groups necessitated the omission of these sessions from the analysis. The resultant analytic sample included data from two FGDs comprising members from each of eight teams and one FGD from each of the two teams in which the videotaping errors had occurred, for a total of 201 women. All qualitative analyses were performed in NVivo 12 using the English translations (QSR International, 2018).

Analysis Plan

The qualitative phase used a thematic analysis approach to identify and interpret patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study team members responsible for analyzing the qualitative data included the first author (the project's primary investigator, who has over seven years' experience in working with the Nikumbuke Soccer League), and the second author, a team member familiar with the setting and an experienced qualitative researcher. These authors, neither of whom speak Kiswahili, consulted with team members who were fluent in Kiswahili in those instances where interpretation of the underlying meaning of a translated phrase was not clear. First, they familiarized themselves with the data by reviewing each transcript, drafted a list of initial codes independently, and then met to

generate a common set of codes. Next, each reader coded two focus groups independently and then compared coding choices to review and refine the codebook. Using this revised codebook, each reader independently coded six of the focus groups to assess interrater reliability. Interrater reliability (Cohen's kappa) was, on average, 97% and ranged from 94-99%. The two readers met to align code definitions. Both then independently finished coding the remaining focus groups, discussing issues as they did so. Focusing on the theme of social support, the two met frequently to further refine, name, and define the theme and sub-themes, and to ensure interrater reliability. Qualitative findings were then presented to the remaining five authors, including those authors who had facilitated the focus groups (third and fourth authors). All authors collaborated on the interpretation of the findings.

RESULTS

Quantitative Findings

Descriptive statistics and findings from the bivariate analyses are reported in Table 3. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 49 years, married with 3 to 5 children, and lived in settled villages. Nearly 40% of respondents had no formal education and another 30% had not completed primary school. Slightly more than one-third of respondents played in the soccer league. Two-thirds or more of the respondents agreed that they had friends on whom they could count for money, emotional support, food, and conversation about important things when needed. Fewer than half of respondents perceived that they had friends who could give them shelter if needed. Summed scores on the PSF scale ranged in value from 0 to 10, with more than one third of respondents perceiving that they would have support from friends on all five items if needed. The mean and median scores for the scale were 7.56 (standard deviation 2.61) and 8.0, respectively; mean scores and response percentages for each item in the scale are reported in Table 1. Nearly two-thirds of respondents had aggregate scores for the PSF scale that were above the mean score. In the bivariate analyses all variables except "type of village" and "participation in other groups" were significantly associated with participation in the soccer league (Table 3). Type of community, participation in soccer, having friends from one's village, and having friends from outside one's village were significantly associated with perceived social support.

Soccer team participation, type of village, having friends from one's village, and having friends from outside one's community significantly increased the odds of having perceived social support scores above the sample mean after

Table 3. Distribution of quantitative sample responses according to soccer team participation and social support composite variable (N = 684)

Variable	Values	n	%	Soccer Team Participation		Social Support	
				χ^2	p	χ^2	p
Social Support (*composite*) – Mean 7.56 (Std. Dev. 2.61)				13.27	<.001	-	-
	At or below mean	253	37.0				
	Above mean	431	63.0				
Soccer Team Participation						13.27	<.001
	Yes	229	33.5	-	-		
	No	455	66.5	-	-		
Age (*categorical*)				52.91	<.001	2.0	.736
	18 to 24 years	57	8.3				
	25 to 34 years	157	23.0				
	35 to 49 years	263	38.5				
	50 to 59 years	86	12.6				
	60 years and over	56	8.2				
	Missing	65	9.5				
Type of community				20.05	<.001	12.57	.006
	Pastoral	95	13.9				
	Mixed	47	6.9				
	Settled	471	68.9				
	Market Town	71	10.4				
Head of household				4.13	.042	1.29	.255
	Self	276	40.4				
	Not self	386	56.4				
	Missing	22	3.2				
Number of children (*categorical*)				14.51	.002	1.03	.795
	None	17	2.5				
	1 to 2	89	13.0				
	3 to 5	355	51.9				
	6 or more	202	29.5				
	Missing	21	3.1				
Relationship Status				4.89	.027	1.51	.219
	Married	536	78.4				
	Regular partner but not married*	31	4.5				
	Not currently in a relationship	114	16.7				
	Missing	3	0.4				
Education				18.12	.001	5.07	.280
	No formal education	268	39.2				
	Some primary	209	30.6				
	Completed primary	129	18.9				

Some secondary	22	3.2				
Completed secondary or higher	46	6.7				
Missing	10	1.5				
Regularly participates in groups other than Nikumbuke Project			1.40	.237	0.12	.728
Yes	448	65.5				
No	231	33.8				
Missing	5	0.7				
Frequency in past 4 weeks with which emotional or physical health has interfered with social activities.			10.90	.028	8.57	.073
None of the time	253	37.0				
A little of the time	247	36.1				
Some of the time	73	10.7				
Most of the time	68	9,9				
All of the time	37	5.4				
Missing	6	0.9				
I have friends that I can talk to about important things.			12.34	.002		
Disagree	64	9,4				
Partially agree	66	9.7				
Agree	552	80.7				
Missing	2	0.3				
I have friends on whom I can count for emotional support.			8.83	.012		
Disagree	46	6.7				
Partially agree	71	10.4				
Agree	564	82.5				
Missing	3	0.4				
I have friends who can give me food if I need it.			8.43	.015		
Disagree	111	16.2				
Partially agree	83	12.1				
Agree	486	71.1				
Missing	4	0.6				
I have friends who can lend me money if I need it.			23.50	.000		
Disagree	110	16.1				
Partially agree	101	14.8				
Agree	466	68.1				
Missing	7	1.0				
I have friends who will give me shelter if I need to leave my household.			8.15	.017		
Disagree	276	40.4				
Partially agree	93	13.6				
Agree	312	45.6				
Missing	3	0.4				
Most of my friends come from my village/my community.			6.54	.038	48.12	<.001
Disagree	101	14.8				

Partially agree	114	16.7			
Agree	465	68.0			
Missing	4	0.6			
I have friends that live in other villages/communities.			2.61	.271	41.46 <.001
Disagree	63	9.2			
Partially agree	57	8.3			
Agree	561	82.0			
Missing	3	0.4			

*Includes women who are living with a partner to whom they are not married (15, 2.2%) and women who have regular partners from whom they live apart (16, 2.3%).

controlling for covariates. Women who played in the soccer league had nearly double the odds of reporting high perceived social support compared to their non-soccer peers (OR 1.98, CI95 1.37, 2.86, p < .001).

Qualitative Findings

Four central themes emerged during the focus group discussions concerning women's participation in the soccer league and their perceptions of its benefits: friendships within and between communities, teambuilding and collaboration, emotional and instrumental support on and off the field, and reduced stress and anxiety. Quotes from focus group participants are utilized throughout this section as thematic headings and to underscore the findings' trustworthiness (Creswell, 2013).

"We make a lot of friends when we go to play soccer." (JIW1-R12)

A number of women expressed that they had few friends prior to joining the soccer league and were lonely. They reported that soccer provided an opportunity to meet and make friends that was otherwise not available to them.

Before I joined the team, I only had one friend- she could not help me much. But after I joined, I made many new friends. I can no longer talk about going back to my mum and dad, I now have friends to whom I can go who are my team. (GOW1-R10)

I only had my neighbor as a friend; now I have the whole team as my friends, even some I do not know where they live, but they are my friends. (MPW1-R7)

References to not knowing another woman's "home" before playing soccer were common. Women reported that soccer had enabled them to meet and form friendships with women from outside their own communities.

It helps with friendships because you can meet someone in the group and yet you do not even know their home. You meet here and build friendships until you get to know their home and they yours. Maybe they come from Kibaoni and you are from Mgombezi, but when you meet, you become friends. (MGW2-R4)

We used to have friends only from this locality, and now we have made friends from far places like Lunga Lunga. Therefore this has brought unity. Therefore we have seen that we have peace. (MAW1-R9)

"You fall down, hold your friend's hand, and stand." (KIW1-11)

As a team sport, soccer requires coordination, communication, and trust among team members. Acknowledging the importance of teamwork, women discussed high levels of encouragement and support among players. Women celebrated each other's improvements and successes, creating an environment that was often described as joyful and festive. As one woman put it, "As we play, that teamwork and coordination brings us to one level and it feels so good and makes us laugh a lot" (MW1-R11). Women observed that even when they had arguments with team members off the field, or things went badly on the field, they maintained their bonds and set arguments aside so that they could move forward together as a team. Women described helping each other up after a fall and helping each other improve. Women described forming friends with other players on their team and opposing teams because they would ask other women for help with soccer skills. As one woman explained:

When you go to play soccer and see a good player, you will want to stay close to her to know how she started. Perhaps

she will tell you that she started by going to see another team play. She can also give you advice that will enable you to help someone else. (JIW1-R2)

In addition to friendships arising from a woman's admiration for another woman's soccer skills, face-to-face competition in soccer created bonds between women: "You know that this is the one that we were fighting for the ball together with. Yes, you get to know each other" (PEW1-R11). As opposed to being adversarial, going head-to-head with an opposing player increased social support and connection for women in the soccer league. "And us, when we play, even if it is hitting my friend, when we have ended the game, I will sit close to her. I tenderly care for that leg and show that friendship so that she knows it wasn't on purpose" (PEW2-R5).

Across focus groups, women frequently echoed some form of the sentiment "When we get to the fields there are no tribes" (MGW2-R12). Women described how one could not focus on who was in one's tribe while playing soccer because one had to focus on who was on one's team and open to receive the ball. Women saw tribalism as disrupting the success of their teams: "If we were tribal as a team, we would not be confident, but since we are [confident], we trust each one of us is going to play their best" (KIW1-R1). As one respondent put it, "we cannot focus on the Digo or Duruma (two different tribal groups in the area); here, we are all equal" (LUW1-Respondent 8). Teamwork and its by-products of trust and interdependency created family-like bonds among the women, who frequently shared the idea that "we have become just like sisters" (PEW1-R1).

Women shared that sister relationships built between women during soccer transcended their village- and tribal-identities and "brought harmony between us and our neighbors" (MAW1-R2). As one participant put it, "When we are in the pitch we are all sisters and nobody cares about tribe. … you will often find two people from different areas becoming close friends" (GOW2-R11). A number of women spoke about the benefits of competing against teams from other communities and how doing so helped them to learn new things.

And something else, the sport for me has brought me together with many people from different areas…. We meet with them, we get to talk and know about other things from those living elsewhere and what they do there. I mean it has helped us to meet up associating with each other and getting to know different things. Now for me there are places that I did not know but I have now known due to going for the sport. (LUW1-R13)

"We lean on each other as a group for support." (MPW1-R1)

Throughout the focus groups, women discussed the emotional support they received from other players. Women described how soccer created the opportunity for them to share their problems with other women and get "lifesaving advice" (JUW1-R1) from one another. As one woman described it: "I have friends, therefore I made networks, in going out and seeing newer things and meeting mothers with diverse thoughts. We sat down and shared; it really changed my life" (PEW2-R8). When women met and an issue arose, "we handle[d] it together" (LUW2-R9). The friendships women described were marked with listening, empathy, and reciprocity: "Yes, it has strengthened the bond. We have become like siblings. When one of us has a problem, we come together and sort it out. We have grown to have strong ties" (MPW2-R9). Importantly, women also pointed to connecting with women from other villages as having helped them gain new insights. Some women shared that being part of the soccer community had connected them to women who "willingly advise us on how we can grow ourselves economically" (MPW1-R1).

[My teammates] also help in suggesting to me ways of attracting income. For example, when I come here, one may tell you, "when coming here to this group of people for sports, you can even come with your half cakes and visheti [sweet pastries]. You make something for the bus". So if I make that and come with them here when I go back, I have made some money. I can buy some salt. I can do something. If it were not for ball, where would I have gotten that? (LLW1-R5).

In addition to emotional support and advice, women discussed the instrumental support that they received from fellow soccer players.

And you help each other a lot because, even if you have a problem, when you meet with your fellow women, you can explain it to them, and you all talk about it as friends and sisters. When you say "I am really troubled, I need your help", your friends will come together and help you. Even if it is watching over your child, your friends can help you. (GOW1-R10)

It has been good for us who play football. We can meet here and I let my team members know that I need financial assistance of about 10,000 KES [approximately $90 U.S. dollars]. The friendship in the group has really helped. When I ask for something, even if not everyone will chip in, you cannot fail to get one or two people who are willing to help. (MGW2-R6)

"When you mix with your friends, all the stress is gone."
(LUW2-R6)

Women described being largely alone prior to joining the soccer league, left to figure out their problems by themselves. Through the friendships forged through soccer, the women have gained an outlet for their worries and problems, which they report has in turn reduced stress and anxiety. Women remarked that the fun and camaraderie associated with playing soccer dispel women's worries.

If you go to the field when you are stressed, maybe someone made you angry, you are thinking, but when you get to the others, the talking and laughing, when you are out of the field, you are stress free, your mind is busy with better thoughts. (JUW1-R5)

As another participant described her experiences:

I used to have very many thoughts when I was alone at home, but once I come and sit with my friends here, then I feel relaxed and go home satisfied. This group has brought us together and is very helpful, not only in matters of football, but also in life problems. I get to share with my friends the issues affecting me and they help me out. It is not that we have no stress or worries, but we just struggle and make it. (PEW1-R3)

Across focus groups women discussed how the social support they had from their teammates decreased their worries and stress, and made them realize that they were not alone in their problems. "We women do not hide anything from each other, so in the conversations on the field we are able to free up. When I am annoyed and get on the field, the anger goes away immediately and I change completely" (PEW2-R4).

Many of the women talked about stress at home and the problems they face as wives and mothers. Although the problems were still there when they returned home from soccer, women found that they worry less about them and recognize that soccer provides an outlet for their anxiety: "When one plays football, one is able to handle the challenges that come from raising children and marriage" (KIW1-R11). As one woman commented:

Some of us could not leave the house to go meet other women, or some were always stressed, do you understand? But right now she is able to leave home and cooperate with others. She has the opportunity to talk to other women, and that has changed her thoughts. Maybe she was angry because of the excess duties or children every time, but right now she leaves the house, her thoughts are lost out

there [on the soccer field] and she comes back home with a fresh mind. (JUW2-R2)

DISCUSSION

This study used a mixed methods approach to examine the nature of and extent to which the women's soccer league contributes to the development goals of enhancing social support, building community cohesion, and improving women's emotional and physical health in rural Kenya. Although the physical and psychosocial benefits of team sports are well-documented in the literature and sports programs have been used with considerable success elsewhere in Kenya to build the social assets of adolescent girls (Brady, 2005; Brady & Khan, 2002; Forde, 2009), very little was known prior to the current study about the benefits of recreational team sports for adult women in Sub-Saharan Africa. Findings confirmed the first two hypotheses in this study: that adult women who play soccer in this setting have higher social support than their non-soccer playing peers, and that the nature of team sport, itself, contributed to building strong perceived social support from friends. Although most women in the Nikumbuke Project reported in the quantitative phase that they had friends, the PSF-scale data would suggest that project members who played in the soccer league had greater odds of feeling that they had friends on whom they could depend for emotional and instrumental support when needed. Because playing soccer required teamwork and interaction with women on other teams, the league created both an enabling environment in which women met and formed friendships and a social space in which they built a network of peers with whom to share their worries. It provided an opportunity for women to share ideas, learn from each other about income-generating activities, and ask for help with childcare, transportation, and expenses when needed. This social network included not only one's team members but extended across teams, villages, tribal affiliations, and religions. This finding is consistent with prior work elsewhere that found team sports to be effective mechanisms for building social capital in women (Ottesen et al., 2010). Friendship, competition, and fun experienced as part of belonging to the league in turn reduced stress and anxiety (see Table 2).

Quantitative results suggested that having friends within and outside one's community, membership in a pastoralist community, and playing soccer were positively associated with perceived social support from friends, controlling for other attributes. It is not surprising that having friends is a significant predictor of women's perceived social support from friends, given that one would not have social support from this source if one did not first have friends on which

one could or could not rely. The majority of women who participated in the surveys reported having friends, both near and far, irrespective of their participation in the soccer league. There are a number of possible explanations for these findings. All survey respondents were members of the Nikumbuke Project. The project provides a social space in which women, whether or not they play soccer, regularly come together in their communities for literacy training, health promotion meetings, and information sharing. Many of the women regularly attend churches, mosques, or other religious gatherings in their communities. Market days in Lunga Lunga draw women weekly from the surrounding communities to sell goods and/or purchase supplies, providing yet more opportunities for women to meet and to socialize.

Women from settled villages and the mixed settled/pastoralist community had significantly lower odds of PSF scores above the sample mean compared to women from the Maasai pastoralist community. This finding may be a reflection of differences in the spatial and non-spatial organization of these communities. Although contemporary Maasai communities in coastal Kenya and northern Tanzania are varied in the degree to which they have been affected by outside cultural and political forces, the Maasai community included in this study general adheres to traditional Maasai domestic and living arrangements. Most families live in boma, residential units that can comprise several independent households of related family members. Although each married man and his household may independently own cattle, grazing rights, control of land, and access to water are owned communally. The unity of a clan, a group sharing a common patrilineal ancestor, is symbolized using common cattle brands, and although more common at the level of the immediate family, clan members have mutual aid obligations to each other in times of need. Women are the de facto heads of houses and act with considerable autonomy with respect to domestic affairs, children and the family economy. This social organization, described as one of mutual dependence and obligations between men and women (Kipuri, 1989) is likely to reflect an environment in which women, in the sharing of daily responsibilities, feel that they can depend on each other. In the other, more settled communities included in this study, the tasks of household production and domestic duties often fall to an individual woman and her children and tasks are not shared in common among neighbors. Women bear responsibility for providing food for their families in an environment of scarcity, leaving them little time in which to socialize with other women. Although the Nikumbuke Project, religious gatherings, and market days create social opportunities for women in settled communities to mingle and form friendships with others, such friendships may not

be characterized by the co-dependencies and sense of mutual obligation that were integral to the Maasai social structure observed in this study.

This distinction between acquaintances and friends on whom one can depend, may help to explain the observed differences in the quantitative findings between Nikumbuke Project members who played soccer and their non-soccer playing peers. These findings showed that being a member of the soccer league was significantly associated with scores above the sample mean on the PSF scale both in the bivariate analysis and in the multivariate model that controlled for other attributes. They validate the study's first hypothesis that women who played soccer have greater perceived social support than their non-soccer playing peers.

Qualitative results provided granular data that helped explain the relationship between soccer and social support and confirmed the study's second hypothesis. Soccer brought women together in an atmosphere of play and friendly competition; it created a time and space in which women could socialize and form friendships near and far. The friendships formed with peers on a soccer team were based on a shared experience and a collective identity. To play league soccer, women had to rely on each other to defend their team's goal, to pass the ball to each other when there was an opening in play, and to shoot to score. Doing this well required that women set aside any differences they may have off the field and come together as a collaborative, supportive network. This shared social identity endured beyond the soccer pitch.

Women who participated in this study daily confront the challenges of poverty, the constant demand of household production and childrearing, and the gender norms that define their roles in their intimate relations, their households, and their communities. In this setting, it is quite possible that soccer is one of the few activities in which women can step away from their responsibilities and duties as wives and mothers. Women told the authors that soccer provided a social space for talking with other women, that games were fun, and that the atmosphere was often festive. Study findings suggest that women's problems were set aside, but not resolved, during soccer. Nonetheless, playing soccer seems to offer a buffer between problems and the worries to which they give rise. This finding is in keeping with the buffering hypothesis put forward by Cohen and Wills (1985) which posits that social support acts as a buffer between stressful events and health outcomes, in this case stress and anxiety. Women commented that while problems persisted, they worried about them less when they returned home after playing soccer with their friends.

Friendships made and cemented through soccer gave women confidence that they had friends on whom they could rely for both emotional and instrumental support when it was needed; in turn, women felt less stress, even when confronting the same problems at home when they stepped back off the pitch. This finding also aligns with research on social support that found that these buffering effects were greater when women shared a social identity (Frisch et al., 2014; McKimmie et al., 2020). In this case, soccer provided a social identity for its team members as well as a shared activity whose structure encouraged mutual dependence and support among women. Focus group participants credited their being part of a soccer team and the support of friends made on the field with reduced feelings of stress and anxiety. Findings from this study offer foundational support for this study's third hypothesis, suggesting that soccer leagues for adult women may be an effective intervention for building social support and improving women's mental health. This may be especially true in settings in which other opportunities for women to step outside the demands of daily life are limited.

Study Limitations

It is important to note limitations in this study and directions for future research. The soccer league under study is embedded within a pre-existing development program that is widely endorsed by the participating communities. Community leaders, husbands, and family members accept that women spend some portion of time each week on Nikumbuke activities that yield benefits to households and communities. Under such circumstances, the setting aside of chores and responsibilities by women to engage in sport may not be viewed as idleness or time wasted in play but rather as part of a larger community-level enterprise. The Nikumbuke Project as a whole is widely viewed as a positive force in the communities and by the women it serves. Many project members, particularly those women who work directly with the program in the provision of literacy training and health information, welcomed the research as an opportunity to support the project and to share their experiences. Members' positive attitudes towards the Nikumbuke Project are likely to have contributed to the high participation rate in the study and may have encouraged women to respond to study questions in ways they felt would reflect favorably on the program. In addition, the soccer league was established at the explicit request of women in the Nikumbuke Project; whether a free-standing women's soccer league that is not demand-driven or part of a broader program of activities would enjoy the same success in building social support for women is not known. Despite strong evidence that emerged in the focus group discussions about the positive role that

soccer plays in overcoming loneliness, building social support, and reducing stress, causal or temporal inferences about the effects of the league on individual levels of PSF could not be derived from the cross-sectional survey data. Longitudinal studies of soccer leagues begun de novo elsewhere or of new teams forming in the future under the Nikumbuke Project would allow for further testing of the PSF scale, and be useful in building an evidence base on the effects of soccer participation on women's social support and its role as a social development tool.

CONCLUSION

Social support has been widely recognized for its positive effects on health and well-being. Recreational team sports, while often adopted as strategies to build social support and enhance well-being among adolescent girls and young women, have to date been underutilized as a sport-for-development intervention to improve the emotional health and well-being of adult women, particularly in lower- and middle-income countries. Evidence from this study suggests that adult women's participation in recreational soccer is positively associated with perceived social support from friends, and that participation in team sports directly contributes to building friendships and social support which, in turn, reduce stress and anxiety in women's daily lives. Given the popularity of soccer in many parts of the Global South and the low costs associated with initiating such programs in rural areas, gender-development programs should consider introducing recreational soccer activities for adult women in under-resourced settings where more complex and costly initiatives may be difficult to implement or sustain.

enthusiastic participation of the staff of the Nikumbuke Project in Lunga Lunga, and the remarkable women of Nikumbuke. A special note of gratitude is due the Nikumbuke teachers who assisted with data collection and focus group coordination.

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Original Research

Experiences abroad: The impacts of an international sport for development trip on American young women

Carrie LeCrom[1], Jennifer Jacobs[2] & Karisa Kuipers[2]

[1] Virginia Commonwealth University, USA
[2] Northern Illinois University, USA

Corresponding author email: cwlecrom@vcu.edu

ABSTRACT

While the field of Sport for Development (SFD) has grown over the last several decades, there remain gaps within program evaluation. Given that there are multiple models of programming SFD, Goals for Girls, a U.S. based SFD non-profit organization that uses soccer-based trips abroad to empower young women, provided a strong platform for study. The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of a SFD trip abroad on American young women. Through interviews with over 30 young women spanning 13-years of programming, three themes and five sub-themes emerged. Collectively, the trips impacted the young women in the areas of relationship building, expansion of perception, and desire for change. The authors suggest that programming like Goals for Girls highlights both the strengths and challenges inherent in SFD.

EXPERIENCES ABROAD: THE IMPACTS OF AN INTERNATIONAL SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT TRIP ON AMERICAN YOUNG WOMEN

Although sport for development (SFD) is no longer in its infancy, there is still much room for exploration and growth. In recent years there has been a blossoming of sub-topics (e.g., theory creation, technology and innovation, leadership), demonstrating progress within the field, yet there remains a need to better understand both intended and unintended impacts of programming. For instance, much of the programmatic impact that has been measured has focused on individual programs and short-term gains (Coalter, 2010; Cohen & Welty Peachey, 2015). Kay (2009) specifically pointed out that the lack of data and resources over an extended period of time makes this difficult. In addition, much of the research around impact focuses specifically on the social change element being implemented within the program. Although this is logical, there is a possibility that programs are demonstrating impact (both positive and negative) beyond their specific and intended reach, but this information is not being captured through traditional evaluation methods. Hancock et al. (2013) state "rather than assess programs based on their primary impact (e.g., individual development, social integration, etc.), perhaps programs should be evaluated more holistically and in relation to the cyclical linkages between individual program components and their collective impact" (para. 36). Looking at programs from a broader, more collective standpoint may lead to new insights and understandings of SFD.

In consideration of under-explored areas within SFD, Goals for Girls provided a unique model for study. Goals for Girls is a United States (U.S.) based non-profit that uses soccer to empower young women. It does this in partnership with other SFD organizations across the globe. In addition to providing year-round programming in local communities, a unique component of the program takes American young women abroad for an exchange opportunity to participate

with other female soccer players in India, Peru, South Africa, and Uganda. With over 150 alumni spanning 13 years of Goals for Girls trips abroad, a cross-sectional sample provided an opportunity to assess the impact of the program in both the short-term (those who had traveled recently) and long-term (those who participated as early as 2007). This population created a uniqueness in that the assessment is not of the local in-country Goals for Girls program participants, but of the Americans traveling abroad as participants. The purpose of the study was, therefore, to understand the experiences of American young women who traveled abroad on a sport-focused SFD trip.

Review of Literature

Perhaps at the forefront of the SFD discussion needs to be the acknowledgement that understanding programming and its impacts is an ever-evolving endeavor. There is general consensus that monitoring and evaluation are crucial to the future of SFD, and many scholars have taken on this issue directly through special issues in journals such as Sport Management Review (Sherry et al., 2015) and the Journal of Sport Management (Welty Peachey et al., 2019). Some of the push for better knowledge and understanding of programming is driven by funders or policy makers (Kay, 2009), but there seems to be focus beyond that to better understand the role sport is (or is not) playing in development collectively.

The field continues to develop as the belief in the power of sport balances itself with practitioners and scholars committed to discerning what works and what does not. Positively, scholars engaged in assessing benefits gained from participation in SFD programs have noted growth in participants' knowledge acquisition, empowerment, and personal confidence (Kay, 2009). Others have seen, specifically in girls, increased physical fitness, mental health, self-esteem and social interaction (Hancock et al., 2013). In post-disaster interventions, sport programming has built resilience, improved physical and mental well-being, and positively impacted the youth involved (Kunz, 2009). These are just a few of the positive outcomes of SFD.

Although many on the side of SFD are evangelical in their belief that sport can tackle some of our toughest social issues, published work demonstrates mixed results. Svensson and Woods (2017) noted that most SFD mission statements are idealistic about sport, and caution that a more balanced view should be adopted. Spaaij (2009) and Langer (2015) discussed a general absence of hard evidence in SFD, noting that many programs are using anecdotal evidence to justify their causes. Coalter and Taylor (2010)

summarized it this way:

Overall, despite certain tendencies, there is no consistent and predictable "sport-for development effect" in terms of personal development. As in all forms of social intervention, the nature and extent of impacts are largely contingent and vary between program types, participants and cultural contexts (p. x).

There also exists the highly criticized power imbalances that present themselves within many SFD programs, especially those driven by Westerners or the "Global North," delivered to members of the "Global South" (e.g., Darnell, 2012; Levermore & Beacom, 2012; Nicholls et al., 2010; Spaaij et al., 2018). Darnell and Hayhurst (2011) discussed SDP programs' colonizing tendencies, and others note that the challenges of North to South programming remain situated in a historical context. Both Darnell (2011) and Dao (2013) assessed the experiences of Canadians and Americans, respectively, who interned for SFD programs abroad. In both studies, similar findings revealed that experiences were simultaneously positive and challenging. Importantly, the experiences resulted in what Dao (2013) terms reflexive privilege and Darnell (2011) calls First World guilt. In short, through their international SFD experience, the interns were forced to confront their own privilege, question the importance of material goods, and better understand inequity in ways they had not previously.

Giulianotti et al. (2016) noted that there seems to be progress in this regard where some of the North-South relationships in SFD are becoming more cooperative partnerships. Despite this potential shift, it remains difficult to separate these patterns from historically created dependencies (Darnell, 2012; Giulianotti et al., 2016). Relatedly, the current study assessed American young women traveling abroad to the Global South, so it is critical to understand the challenges that previous scholars have found related to these issues. Framing the current study as an investigation of the experiences of American young women abroad as SFD participants, much still stands to be learned about how the young women were impacted by their experiences. Pugh's (2011) transformative experience theory defines a transformative experience as a "learning episode in which the student acts on the subject matter by using it in everyday experience to more fully perceive some aspect of the world and find meaning in doing so" (p. 111). Given the potential for personal growth through a SFD experience abroad, this theory served to underpin the research.

Transformative Experience Theory

Rooted in Dewey's (1980) teachings connecting education to everyday experience, Pugh (2004, 2011) proposes three characteristics that shape the way individuals are impacted by new learning experiences. First, an individual may experience the characteristic of *experiential value*, where learning content is perceived in a way that it enriches everyday experience through emotions of enjoyment, interest, intrinsic value, or satisfaction. Another characteristic, *expansion of perception*, is described as experiencing changed perceptions about learning content in a way that causes a "re-seeing" of the world. Under this category, individuals begin to connect what they learned to aspects around them, facilitating new perspectives or viewpoints. Finally, the concept of *motivated use* portrays the behavioral aspect of learning, where individuals are inspired to act on their knowledge through transferring new actions to their daily lives. Importantly, this aspect derives from an individual's intrinsic needs rather than through prompting from others. The three aspects of transformative experience do not follow a linear pattern and often present as a dynamic interaction with overlapping qualities (Pugh et al., 2010). Therefore, transformative experience should be viewed as a holistic occurrence where individuals may experience multiple forms of engagement across one occasion.

Recently, transformative experience has been utilized within the sport-based youth development literature, exploring it as a representation of the impact of sport participation on everyday life. Jacobs and Wright (2021) proposed transformative experience theory as an illustration of how youth make use of important life skills (e.g., leadership, responsibility) gleaned through sport and then transfer them to their outside lives in school, home, or within their communities. The transformative experience theory as it applies to the sport context invites a multifaceted conceptualization for how individuals may experience the impact of deeply engaging experiences. Given the current study's sport-focus in an immersive international setting, a unique environment existed in which to study change or growth within participants. The study's research goal, therefore, was to assess the impact of a SFD trip abroad on American young women.

METHOD

This research was focused on identifying impacts on young women who participated in a SFD trip abroad, adopting a qualitative design, primarily due to the exploratory nature of the study. Kay (2009) notes the value of qualitative approaches in SFD, suggesting, "the particular value in securing accounts of this type is that they provide a mechanism for addressing the complex social phenomena with which we are concerned" (p. 1180).

The research team took a collaborative approach to analysis that looked at the transformative experience theory (Pugh, 2004; 2011) as an important basis of understanding, while also allowing for new ideas to challenge the underpinning (Patton, 2015; Richards & Hemphill, 2018; Richards et al., 2020). In planning the study, a uniqueness existed in that the program from which participants were drawn has been organizing trips since 2007, so participants spanned a 13-year time frame, some having participated in the trip over a decade ago, and some having had the experience very recently. As such, the research team adopted a basic qualitative design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) that aimed to capture the complex and individualistic experiences of the participants. Semi-structured interviews were selected as the method of data collection, given that the one-on-one conversations would allow researchers to gather participant insights about their social contexts and interpretations of the experience abroad (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Additionally, the interview method created a structure that valued the uniqueness of each participant (Jason & Glenwick, 2016), while allowing collective themes to emerge. Additionally, interviews allowed for a focus on context, culture, and setting (Brodsky et al., 2016), all critical to the impacts of the experience.

Research Context

Goals for Girls, the program included in this study, is a non-profit SFD organization dedicated to using soccer to teach young women to become leaders and community change agents (Goals for Girls, 2019). Started in 2007, one of the components of the Goals for Girls model is global exchanges, where groups of American female soccer players travel to low- and middle-income communities abroad for approximately two-weeks. During these visits, the young women participate in the Goals for Girls program by connecting with their peers abroad through the sport of soccer, focusing on leadership development, life skills education, and community change. The program focus is on leadership development through cross-cultural learning and exposure.

Each trip is multi-faceted. As an example, a trip to India may involve spending the first week of the trip collaborating with a girls' soccer team in the host community. The American and Indian young women will have established pen-pal relationships ahead of time and do team building activities to foster relationships. Both groups of young women, along with their coaches, will lead each

other through typical activities they would utilize for their soccer training and SFD work. The American young women would also accompany pen pals to their homes for a few hours to gain perspective on the life of a young Indian woman, cooking with them or participating in their daily chores.

The second week of a trip is a five-day Youth Leadership Summit. The Youth Leadership Summit is what can best be described as a 'soccer camp plus.' Teams of young women from across the host country, as well as the American team, are invited to attend the summit, all staying in hostel-type lodging for the duration. The summit is led by a combination of U.S. coaches and Indian coaches who collaborate on content, all of which is soccer-based and leadership/life-skill focused. Coaches and leaders are trained by Goals for Girls staff, prior to each summit, through virtual- and in-person sessions that cover the session topics, how to teach the sessions, and topics that may arise as a result of the sessions, as well as how to handle those and dialogue with the young women in the best manner. Each activity has a lesson built within, focusing on topics such as confidence, resilience, communication, and leadership. All young women, both American and those from the host country, are also allotted time each day to work on a community change project. With oversight from the summit staff and their soccer coach who attends the summit with them, the young women work with their team to come up with a blueprint for a project they can take home to implement in their local community, whether that be in the United States or the local host country. These projects vary greatly depending on the most pressing needs of each community, but have included topics focused around recycling, gender empowerment, mental health, and public health education. Coaches return to home communities with the young women (both American and local), providing oversight and accountability around the change projects. There are additional activities planned in the evenings for the American and Indian young women to build relationships, such as dance parties, skits, drawing, or giving each other Henna tattoos. Youth Leadership Summits typically include approximately 250 youth. The American young women who attend the trip are participants in the Goals for Girls programming, engaging in the exact same way as their host country counterparts. Between 2007 and 2018, Goals for Girls completed 11 trips, including five to India, one to Peru, four to South Africa, and one to Uganda (Goals for Girls, 2019). Although each Goals for Girls global exchange varies slightly by location, the example provided above outlines the template of each.

American young women are recruited to the exchanges through the Goals for Girls staff connections to youth women's soccer teams in the U.S. The staff contacts youth

clubs around the country to gauge their interest in participating, and the youth coaches recruit directly through their clubs. In most cases, all American young women who travel on a trip are part of one youth soccer team within one club. Young women self-select into the program, as it is not a requirement of the team, but is an opportunity presented to them as a result of their participation on a soccer team. They are high school aged and travel with chaperones who are part of the full-time Goals for Girls staff, as well as their own youth soccer coaches. Teams included in the exchanges have come from California, North Carolina, Utah, and Washington D.C. The size of the group of young women from the U.S. has varied from 11-21.

The local, host country young women who participate alongside the American young women during the summit are from across their countries. They are recruited through their local youth soccer programs who stay connected to the Goals for Girls community of practice throughout the year. Through funding provided by donations and grants secured by Goals for Girls staff, the in-country young women travel to the central site of the Youth Summit free of charge. For most of these young women, it is the first and often only time they have left their home communities. Demographically, the young women vary by country, but are typically teenagers (13-19 years old) and come from low-income, marginalized communities.

Participants and Procedures

This qualitative study consisted of one-on-one interviews with American young women who participated in any of the 11 Goals for Girls global exchanges between 2007 and 2018. The research team was provided with contact information for all global exchange participants (158 total). After receiving ethics board approval, researchers randomly selected three participants from each exchange to be contacted via email for an interview. Those who were unresponsive were sent one follow-up email, and if the researcher did not hear back, another young woman from that trip was randomly selected. New random selections were also made in the case that the email addresses provided were no longer in use. This process continued until the researchers reached a sample size of 31, with at least two interviews coming from each exchange.

Interviews were conducted via phone, Zoom, Skype, or WhatsApp, at the preference of the participant. Interviews lasted just under one hour and were audio recorded, then transcribed verbatim. The interview guide was semi-structured and included questions focused on background information (personal history, recall of the trip, what they did during the global exchange), and impact (how the

program impacted them). Researchers framed questions related to program impact around self-perceptions and behaviors (e.g., "has being in the program made you see yourself differently, do things differently?") as well as how the young women conceptualized the experience (e.g., "how often do you think about the trip?", "what would other peers/family members say about your experience?"). This enabled reflections that went beyond the "what" of the trips into the "how" and "why" in a more thoughtful way. All interviews were conducted in English with native English speakers. All participants were female and were over the age of 18; the age range of participants was 18-31. Participants were given pseudonyms to protect anonymity.

Data Analysis

Analysis was framed around Saldaña's (2014) coding principles for qualitative research, which describes a cyclical process that involves analyzing, reorganizing, and refining codes until they become themes. Initially, a mix of deductive and inductive analyses were performed, guided by the transformative experience framework. However, researchers ultimately determined that a more participant-centered approach matched the framing of the study and chose to prioritize participant-generated language as opposed to matching the terminology of the theory. Therefore, drawing from inductive analyses, researchers participated in an initial round of open coding on the complete data set (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Examples of these initial codes included "youth as teachers," "out of comfort zone," and "learning life skills." In phase two, the researchers reviewed the theoretical framework for the study (Pugh, 2011) which helped guide the creation of a codebook that combined inductive codes with tenets of the theory (e.g., motivated use, experiential value, expansion of perception: Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Next, an iterative process of collapsing and revising the codebook to account for redundant codes occurred in phase three, and the revised codebook was reapplied to all the data (Saldaña, 2014). A final phase compared each researchers' coded data, giving each an opportunity to explain their interpretation of the data while the others listened and provided feedback. This final step drew benefits derived from "critical friends" (Smith & McGannon, 2018, p. 113). It ensured that interpretations were coherent and directly derived from the data, while also respecting that each scholar brings his or her own history to the process of analysis. The iterative process resulted in what the research team determined as the most accurate and comprehensive results produced by the data collected, and are presented with an acknowledgement that "accessing an independent social reality, depicting people's realty accurately with certitude, or producing credible or trustworthy results that

correspond to that reality is untenable" (Smith & McGannon, 2018, p. 106).

Positionality Statement

The three authors took a constructivist approach to the research process and subscribed to the belief that the participants' individual experiences were to be interpreted to generate meaning while also acknowledging the role of relationships in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). All three authors identify as white females, sport management academicians, and each author has prior experience in leading SFD programs in the United States and abroad. The first author served as a chaperone on one Goals for Girls trips to India in 2017.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Three major themes emerged through this research related to the experiences of the American young women who traveled abroad for short-term SFD experiences. The themes include development of relationships, expansion of perception, and desire for change. A discussion of related literature accompanies each theme.

Development of Relationships

The first theme describes the nature of the relationships developed between the participants and the young women in the host countries. Throughout the interviews, the participants made references to the impact of the experience on their ability to foster meaningful connections in a cross-cultural atmosphere. There was a common recognition of how, despite being in a foreign setting, the environment fostered genuine relationships with the local young women. Jasmine (India/2017) shared:

It's so hard to describe because it's just the truest relationships I've ever made. The young women just pour their love out on you and you do the same to them and you get really close. I talk to my pen pals still today. The young women from the summit email me and check in. It's like you have like a little sisterhood across the globe.

Another participant, Alexis (India/2016), reflected on the meaning she gleaned from taking on a role model position throughout the program:

Building those relationships with the other young women was really cool. We are kind of influencing them and teaching them…Just seeing that we made a change in their lives. It was really cool teaching them that they have a say

at such a young age. We heard stories about young women much older [who] still didn't have the courage to stand up for themselves. So [we] let those young women know at a younger age that they have the power in their future.

According to participants, a feature of the Goals for Girls program was a prioritization of relationship-building. Instead of focusing solely on philanthropic efforts such as "going to orphanage and painting a wall of a school" (Isabel, South Africa/2017), the nature of the program created a structure for participants to develop meaningful connections in a sustained way, discover similar interests, and develop camaraderie. One specific program feature included becoming pen pals before the trip, which Sarah (India/2015) elaborated on:

One interaction that still struck me today would be the ones that I've had with my pen pal. I think just having at first that connection that we were writing to each other and then when I finally got to meet each other, we already had a base of kind of a friendship. I just remember when we got [to India] we were like instantly able to become friends, not just, "I'm this American girl here and she's this Indian girl." We were really just able to get along and there was almost like there are not many differences between us, which was really cool.

The interactive nature of the Youth Leadership Summit along with the informal, unstructured times to play soccer were also viewed as important facilitators of relationship-building. Julie (South Africa/2010) described the summit setting as a "safe space" and "the first time she had been so personally open with people." Furthermore, Jenny (South Africa/2007) provided an example of how the interactive activities helped facilitated relationships:

There was one girl that was in my group…who told me a lot about her family and her friends and what she likes to do and we sort of developed a little relationship while we were there. It was special because, again, these are people that you think you have nothing in common with but then there's something like soccer that brings you together.

The impact of developing relationships among program participants has been observed in prior SFD research. In one study, American university students who spent a week delivering a seminar to coaches in Belize reflected on the importance of developing relationships to help foster mutual learning and dissipate any power imbalances (Jacobs et al., 2020). In this study, crucial elements such as team building exercises, playing sports together, and engaging in meaningful discussions about social change were viewed as facilitators of quality cross-cultural

relationships in SFD programs. This appeared key in the participants' learning experiences in the current study as they reflected on how cross-cultural friendships impacted their perceptions about relating to peers from the host country, as well as circled back to their personal development (e.g., relational skills, being viewed as a role model, etc.).

Building meaningful relationships within SFD programs has also been explored through a gendered lens, oftentimes through the "safe spaces" created for females to participate in sports and interact with peers (Brady, 2005; Chawanski, 2011). Vybav et al. (2015) postulated that a SFD program in India enabled peer relationships to grow faster as a byproduct of creating intentionally accepting spaces for women and girls to participate in physical activity. Similarly, Hayhurst (2013) examined a girls' sports program in Uganda and found that the program augmented social networks in addition to increasing confidence, challenging gender norms, and improving physical fitness. Together, these studies highlight the importance of fostering relationships among female participants in sport programs for the benefits of developing both personal and social skills.

Expansion of Perception

In addition to developing relationships, participants described how their perceptions expanded outwardly, through seeing and understanding the world in new ways. This expansion of perception included recognizing privilege and guilt in addition to developing global mindedness.

Recognizing Privilege and Guilt

The first expression of expanded perceptions was evident in how participants expressed guilt for their privileged backgrounds, as well as a recognition of the social inequalities that existed in the countries abroad compared to their communities in the U.S. Given the novelty of the cross-cultural experience (i.e., being abroad without their families for a specific, non-tourist experience), many participants were confronted with how their lives at home fit within a larger world context. For instance, Brianna (South Africa/2007) reflected:

It was very, very hard for me to reconcile how much I had here in the U.S. compared to the people that we saw there, and how happy they were versus how unhappy I was … it made me feel very, very guilty. [At the time,] it didn't make me change anything, necessarily. I do think it made me a little angrier towards people that aren't treated well.

Although this participant did not admit to adjusting her behavior in order to assuage her guilt while abroad, it was apparent she experienced discomfort with how some local people were treated, potentially as a result of systematic inequalities or issues related to race, class, and gender.

Similar phenomena have been captured in prior sport for development research through participants' experiences of First World Guilt (Darnell, 2011) or reflexive privilege (Dao, 2013). According to Darnell (2011), Canadian student interns participating in cross-cultural experiences in Africa and the Caribbean were confronted with reconciling their own social and material privileges in relation to the individuals with whom they interacted abroad. Similarly, Dao's (2013) work conceptualized participants' reflexive privilege as American participants realizing they were "once complicit in and resistant to reproducing inequitable power relations, personal ideologies and Americanization processes while in their host countries" (p. 1). Darnell (2010b) also mentions that it is difficult to separate social constructions of race from connections to privilege and feminism; likely, while not mentioned directly, some of the experiences of privilege and guilt among the participants can be connected to race as well.

In some cases, participants conceptualized their recognition of privilege in a way that was uncomfortable for them, seeing the use of SFD in this experience as being reflective of a 'white savior' complex. Many noted that the leaders of Goals for Girls had discussions around this topic specifically before the trip, describing the idea and feelings of being a "white savior," how problematic it can be in the development world, and how to minimize its impact. Laura (India/2015) said:

I think we should have addressed more of the white savior and talking about the culture, and making sure that we weren't impacting in the wrong ways. So I think just having a world view of knowing that maybe some of the things that we did weren't great even though we had good intentions. That's one of my biggest qualms that I've always had with this project was I was always like, "Are we doing this for the right reasons?"

Although perhaps uncomfortable for many of the young women on the trip, the acknowledgement of colonialism and perceptions of "white savior" are important in how they approach the world moving forward. Maria's (South Africa/2007) comment illustrates the sense of superiority that may arise when there is lack of awareness of privilege:

At the time [I felt] people were not appreciating the weight of what it means to represent our team. [I remember] just

wanting to be really respectful of other people's homes and spaces and feeling a little frustrated at times that it felt like maybe there wasn't the utmost respect being given.

Accordingly, in order to address the privilege and power dynamics, SFD or sport programs abroad should work to adopt a democratic and collaborative approach where local voices are prioritized throughout all phases of program conception, delivery, and evaluation, which has been suggested by several scholars in the past (Giulianotti et al., 2016; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013; Wright et al., 2016).

Developing Global-Mindedness

Not only did the program render growth in perceptions of privilege and guilt, but participants also recognized how the trip helped them think about the world from a more global perspective. Participants recognized that before the trip, they assumed that other parts of the world were different than their own. Hailey (South Africa/2017) mentioned that "Africa and Asia felt like a whole different universe." Although participating in the program, participants observed differences between the country they visited and the U.S. For example, one participant detailed the disparities she observed in medical practices while her team was visiting an Indian leprosy colony. However, despite perceptions about how the world operates, participants managed to find similarities. Maria (South Africa/2007) grappled in this way, "Wow, the world is such a big place, and there are so many different ways to find connection, and find meaning and purpose, and even just ways of relating to a sport." Monica (South Africa/2017) described how connecting with people from the host country informed her perspective of the culture:

It was more seeing something I had never seen and then understanding how even though a lot of the people I was interacting with had very different backgrounds than me, I could still find ways to connect with them and interact with them and have common interests. That was not only to start a friendship but also build some type of mutual understanding or trust between us.

Seeing the environments in which people live also created an opportunity to gain perspective. Participants identified how experiencing a different culture deflated stereotypes they had prior to their trip (e.g., "Africans are primitive"; Isabel, South Africa/2017). This finding is consistent with previous study abroad programs that indicate when students are exposed to a cultural context different than their own, they start to recognize their own biases and can begin shifting their perceptions of others based on what they have experienced (Douglas & Jones-Rikkers, 2001; LeCrom et

al., 2020).

Although some stereotypes were eliminated, participants were also exposed to the challenging realities in other countries. For example, one participant described an encounter during a soccer game where one African girl spat at another and called her an offensive name regarding the color of her skin; Isabel attributed this to the remaining effects of Apartheid. Miranda (South Africa/2018) provided another example of how being exposed to the every-day realities of life in another country influenced her perspective. She explained:

I gained a wider perspective of the world around me because the environment is so different in South Africa. I live in an apartment, and I thought that that was a small house, but we went to a girl's house, and her house is literally the size of my bedroom. I also noticed the ways that young women are treated there and how much they are put down in their community. It made me really grateful to live where I am, and it made me want to change the way that young women are seen in other places in the world.

Not only did this encounter expand her perspective, it also sparked a desire to change. This notion was consistent for many participants; as they saw the way others lived and worked, they responded with heightened awareness, gratitude, and a passion for empowerment. Scholars have indicated similar findings in that cross-cultural experiences increase empathy, awareness of other ways of life, and acceptance of cultural differences (Appleby & Faure, 2015; Black & Duhon, 2006; LeCrom et al., 2015). Overall, an expanded worldview was certainly a result of the Goals for Girls trips.

Desire for Change

In addition to the development of relationships and expansion of perception recognized through the program, participants also described their desire for change after engaging in the experience abroad, noting how they took action to apply what they learned on the trip. Participants elaborated on both immediate and sustained actions that resulted after the Goals for Girls program and also commented on the process by which these behavioral impacts occurred.

Immediate Actions

For some, the experience abroad facilitated immediate actions, which were conceptualized as behaviors that were easy to implement into day-to-day life and that were already in the participant's realm of experience (e.g., volunteering

more). Participants often described these actions as choices they made to learn more about the world after the trip which often involved reading books or news. Maria (South Africa/2007) commented that she was "much more interested in international politics after that trip," and that as a result, she "read a book about different development models." Participants understood the value of continuing to explore diverse perspectives and took action to do so:

Right now, I have signed myself up for daily emails about world news and news in the U.S. just to educate myself more because expanding our perspective, as I have come to learn in my experiences in India, is just so beneficial. If you only view the world through one lens, you just miss out on so much (Angela, India/2018).

Participants also described how the trip increased their desire to volunteer. For example, Sarah (India/2015) explained, "I definitely have participated in more service because of it [the program]. I think I have become a lot more aware of volunteerism because of it." Others detailed how these volunteering commitments ranged from "random little events around while I'm in college. Like a blood drive or just a table where we make meals for people" (Amy, Peru/2012) to "volunteering weekly in an afterschool program since freshman year [of college]" (Sarah, India/2015).

Sustained Actions

Although learning by reading and increased volunteering marked immediate behavioral impacts, career-related changes characterized the sustained impacts observed after the trip. For some, the program facilitated outcomes that required greater commitment and necessitated a new context or different role (e.g., change in career path). More recent participants in the program identified how the Goals for Girls trip may influence their future plans. Alexis remarked, "Maybe I could go on another humanities trip that might teach kids how to read and write or English. Or I could work for Goals for Girls. Maybe I'll pursue a career in that." An additional example of wondering about how their experience abroad might affect her career was explained by Olivia (India/2015):

I don't know for sure what I want to do career wise, but that trip has actually impacted what I foresee myself doing in the future. I've always been interested in sports, and Goals for Girls opened my mind that I could do non-profit or service through sports.

Although some younger participants speculated about future actions the trip might inspire, others noted how the

trip already affected their decisions. Angela (India/2018) explained how the program influenced her college search process. She said:

I want to work in a non-profit when I'm older. And so when I'm looking at colleges now, I'm evaluating what it has to offer me in terms of the future and how it can lead me into following my dream of using that knowledge and these experiences [from the trip] in the future as well.

Older participants connected the Goals for Girls trip to their chosen disciplines in college. Dana (Peru/2012) explained "this is actually very connected to my trip. So, my major is behavioral neuroscience and I have a minor in global engagement" while Julie (South Africa/2010) echoed a similar sentiment saying, "I minored in public health, which actually was a decision I made a lot because of the Goal for Girls trip." Beyond majors, some participants noted connections to their academic experiences in the form of study abroad. Sofie (South Africa/2007) explained:

The trip became part of my narrative as to where my career path went and why it went in the direction it did. It was one of the key early stops along that path. And I'd say that my parents and the people around me would really acknowledge that it was an important influence on what I decided to do, career wise. [After the trip], I maintained a love for health and different things going on in Sub-Saharan Africa. Because then I ended up studying abroad in Ghana and Uganda in college as a result, as well.

In this way, Goals for Girls participants saw significant life changes as a result of their experience abroad. This is consistent with study abroad impacts, where participants have reported that their trip "continues to influence interactions with people from different cultures" and also "ignited an interest in a career direction pursued after the experience" (Dwyer & Peters, 2004, p. 56). Importantly, scholars have noted the delineation between immediate and sustained actions, finding that both are essential to the learning process. Heddy and Pugh (2015) suggest that immediate changes can lead to sustained changes and, despite being smaller in scale, can foster "outcomes such as conceptual change, transfer of learning, and transfer of learning strategies" (p. 55). Altogether, regardless of the magnitude of life changes, it is clear that the Goals for Girls experience impacted future decisions and behaviors of participants.

Process

Although describing how the experience abroad influenced their motivation to apply what they had learned after the

trip, participants identified the role that the trip played in their behavioral change process. Participants often acknowledged the trip's role in their future decision-making but were hesitant to identify the trip as the only determinant. Monica (South Africa/2017), for instance, noted that she was involved in more clubs after the trip but that it was an action she "probably would've done regardless." Participants often identified the trip as something that "sparked an interest" (Hailey, South Africa/2017), "reaffirmed a lot of things" (Brittany, Peru/2012), or "propelled and honed" (Brianna, South Africa/2007). In this way, participants identified the program as a catalyst for behavioral change compared to the sole facilitator.

An experience abroad serving as a catalyst for future decisions is evident in previous studies. When describing education and career attainment as one benefit of study abroad, Dwyer and Peters (2004) explained how the abroad experience launched participants into future endeavors. Additionally, volunteer experiences in SFD have been shown to enhance participants' motivation to continue to work in social change (Welty Peachey et al., 2015).

A possible explanation for why the Goals for Girls experience served as a catalyst for future decisions is related to the role of sport. Participants often referred to sport as a universal language, identifying that even if the young women could not communicate in the same spoken language, they were able to play soccer together and find ways of getting to know one another on the field. Natalie (India/2014) noted:

If anything, [Goals for Girls] really highlighted how special I think soccer is, and even though it's a sport, it can bring people together even if you don't speak the same language. You can still play the game together, which I think is really special.

This quote suggests that sport has an almost unexplainable power to connect people. Although the "power of sport" can often be evangelized in the SFD world, sometimes without the data to back it up (Coalter, 2013; Levermore, 2008), sport does seem to foster feelings of belonging and commonality. In their studies, Darnell (2011) and Dao (2013) found, similar to the findings in this study, that interns' prior sporting experience allowed them to connect with program participants and to see sport as a powerful tool for development. Darnell (2011) noted that interns found sport to be a useful entry point, but also posited that their prior connection to sport brought them to the internship, and that perhaps this resulted in them seeing sport as more useful than others might have. This is

certainly a possibility with the current study, in that all participants already loved the sport of soccer, so perhaps saw it in a less critical light than those coming from outside sport.

REFLECTIONS

Collectively, the themes and sub-themes demonstrated both positive and negative impacts on program participants. Allowing for both immediate and sustained actions to emerge through the cross-sectional design, the research team was able to identify ways in which the short-term programs abroad changed the young women. Several broader discussion points cut across all themes and are worthy of further consideration.

It is important to reiterate that in discussing transformative experience theory, Pugh (2011) notes that the elements of the theory cannot or should not be parceled out separately, yet through some of the current study's findings, they are discussed independently. That said, they were all occurring simultaneously in participants and showed significant overlap, reinforcing the collaborative nature of the elements of a transformative experience. Regardless, it seems evident, especially given the *desire for change* theme, that a transformative experience occurred in many of the young women.

Specifically, the behaviors that participants were motivated to change indicate more than just a perspective shift. For both participants who had attended the trip in recent years (short-term) as well as those who had attended over a decade earlier (long-term), there were clear examples of behavioral change occurring. Approximately 72% of the young women made active choices that impacted their future because of their Goals for Girls experiences abroad - these included things like career choices (e.g., humanitarian work, health and service-based careers), taking courses in college to expand their understanding of their experiences (e.g., African studies, foreign language minor), joining clubs and volunteer organizations post-trip, and more consciously seeking out opportunities to study and live abroad. Although participants were careful to note that these choices could not completely be attributed to their SFD experience, they were clear that Goals for Girls played a large part in these decisions.

These changes may be positive indicators for the future of SFD. Through their participation in a SFD trip abroad, these young women learned more about sport's role in development, grew as individuals, and reflected on ways they can contribute to social development. Cohen and Welty Peachey (2015) studied a former SFD participant who later went on to become a coach and social entrepreneur for the same organization. They noted that "SSUSA elicited a passion and desire to continue involvement with the program and to give back to society," resulting in her embracing her role as a leader and becoming a cause champion for the same organization from which she benefitted (Cohen & Welty Peachey, 2015, p. 120). Other scholars note that re-engaged youth (those who were once SFD program participants and re-engage as coaches/administrators) "offer special leadership skills and a unique type of peer mentorship to enable change" (Hoekman et al., 2019, p. 620).

The findings from this study indicate participants developed the skills and knowledge that may lead to the creation of cause champions or re-engaged youth who could play a positive leadership role in SFD at large. Even the more challenging experiences and reflections that resulted from their trips (e.g., First World guilt, recognition of inequities and privilege) may ultimately make them more respectful, informed, and socially-aware individuals, which is critical to leaders entering the SFD space that is so riddled with issues of power dynamics. Schulenkorf (2017) notes that SFD organizations need to "continue to invest in developing the leadership potential of others to help prepare for periods of leadership transition and sustainable development." (p. 247). Darnell (2010a) posits that programs like these support "exploring, theorizing, and situating their work within the broader politics of development and global inequality and to think directly about the approaches to social change that their use of sport facilitates" (p. 71). It would seem that the women who have participated in Goals for Girls, or similar SFD experiences as young adults, may make them ripe for leadership positions in the field in the future. Community sport and sport for development have certainly benefited from community champions or change agents, as they can often provide human capital and capacity building so critical to the field (Keane et al., 2021; Schulenkorf, 2010; Vail, 2007). The idea of "cause champions" or leaders in SFD emerging from within programs themselves seems to be an idea taking hold, and one worth continuing to explore.

There is, however, also the likelihood that for some, the experience reinforced power and race dynamics ever present in SFD. Some comments from participants related to them feeling like "leaders" or "mentors" are likely related to a sense of privilege or seniority based upon racial underpinnings, "Western" privilege, or even feminism related to a woman's role in different cultural contexts. Darnell (2010b) discusses pieces of this as the politics of underdevelopment, noting that underdevelopment can at times be mislabeled as "issues of culture" (p. 405). When

not properly unpacked or historically situated, those experiencing this can further exacerbate the separation of "us" versus "them." It is possible that participants came to experience their time abroad as a reinforcement of "Whiteness as a standpoint of radicalized privilege" (Darnell, 2007, p. 574), negating some of the positive progress of SFD.

It is important also to acknowledge that the aim of this study, to understand how the experience abroad impacted participants, includes how it has continued to impact their future experiences. In other words, what mechanisms were at play that influenced their decisions, what skills they developed that became germane to other settings, and how they thought about their experience as a whole shaping their life opportunities. Interview data did indicate some notable patterns in this regard, namely that the experience encouraged or stimulated interests and passions participants felt they already had, but were able to more intentionally explore during the experience abroad. Other participants described the influence of time on their appraisals of the experience, noting that they often did not realize how it impacted their life until they were confronted with milestones later in their life (e.g., attending graduate school, traveling as an adult, pursuing careers).

However, in line with this aim to understand how and why the SFD experience impacted them, it should be noted that participants did not demonstrate a depth or breadth of examples that warranted the "how and why" as its own theme. This may be due to the complex nature of being able to communicate about cognition in real-time (i.e., thinking about thinking, identifying the 'why'). Previous research has proposed that generating insights and reflecting about abstract concepts such as the impact of an event in an interview setting is a challenge for participants and can sometimes take multiple interviewing sessions (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). It may also be that participants do have the capacity to understand these complex topics but instead want to discuss experiences of interest that precipitated the impact (e.g., rich, memorable stories or examples from being abroad) rather than cognitive processes that resulted. This refers to participants' "interest" and "stake" in questions and their subsequent responses, which often demonstrates a preference for reporting events rather than extracting meaning from them (Potter & Hepburn, 2005).

Similarly, Jacobs and Wright (2021) noted a challenge in their research when interviewing adolescents about the meaning and impact of a community-based sport program they had been involved in for several years. Also using Pugh's (2011) transformative experience framework, when researchers prompted participants to share how the program

impacted their thinking and behaviors, they typically responded with examples of content from the program rather than why or how those examples shaped them. With this in mind, future studies should consider multiple interviews with the same participant, or even journaling over extended periods of time, so that they have multiple instances to reflect on their cognition (Potter & Hebron, 2005). Furthermore, future researchers exploring this phenomenon should consider opportunities to strengthen the interview guide in an effort to prompt responses that more internationally align with how and why the experience impacted them (e.g., "how frequently does the trip cross your mind and in what situations?"). Schulenkorf et al. (2016) note in their SFD integrated literature review that one of the primary research findings of studies in the field relates to implications for the design of future programs. Better understanding the "why" of a study such as this would help bring clarity and direction to practitioners, so is certainly worthy of future exploration.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite promising findings, we note some limitations in the present investigation. This study followed a cross-sectional design, so although we are able to decipher impacts that occurred both in the short-term and long-term, our results do not capture evidence of individual impact across extended periods of time. More robust study designs implementing a longitudinal approach would offer insight on how participants' perceptions change across different life stages. Despite this limitation, to our knowledge, this is the first study in the SFD literature that offers an extensive sample of 31 individuals' experiences spanning 13 years of trips abroad.

Other factors that could have impacted the results of the study relate to our assessment of the participants' immediate and sustained actions as a result of the trip abroad. In our analysis, we recognize that our delineation of these elements may bias the younger participants' (those who participated on the trips more recently) behaviors to be characterized as smaller changes, given that they have limiting contextual factors (e.g., age, ability to explore career options through higher education, independence). It may be that the subgroup of recent program alumni have not yet had the opportunity or time to engage in the more life-changing behaviors that some of the older alumni have. Fortunately, Pugh's (2011) transformative experience theory addresses the important point that it is often the small, micro changes that lead to more macro level, holistic changes in individuals' worldviews. Therefore, as prior research has supported, we predict that participants may experience larger, more transformative changes related to

interests, emotions, and development of academic and career choices over time (Pugh et al., 2014).

Additionally, this study utilized an all-female population, so it is difficult to ascertain whether the results would be consistent across all genders. The authors consciously chose not to focus the study specifically on gender-related issues, so did not ask questions directly related to gender, nor did gender empowerment or the "girling" of development (Chawansky & Schlenker, 2015) emerge organically through the interviews. Saavedra (2009) notes that gender is only invoked within SFD when studies specifically include girls and women. Numerous SFD studies that have included all male populations have been generalized across both genders, and gender has not been centralized within those. So although this population was all female, the hope is that it provides context to SFD experiences abroad for all participants.

Finally, the results of this study offer some opportunities for future research uncovering the impact of SFD trips abroad for young people. The current study provided insight on what types of effects SFD trips abroad offered this group of young women. What could be further expanded is what specific features of the trip impacted them so profoundly. Some possible explanations that emerged from the data highlight the human element of the experience as a catalyst for growth and change. Specifically, the program element of connecting American young women with individuals from the partnering country as pen pals before the trip and getting the opportunity to play soccer and tour their homes, schools, neighborhoods while abroad seemed to play a lasting and important role. In many cases, participants discussed keeping in touch with the young women from the hosting countries several years after the experience. We suspect intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954) might offer explanations for this discovery, as it examines how cross group contact can be positive and impactful when connections are based on equality, common goals, cooperation, and support from others. Given the structure of many SFD programs and the emphasis on fostering cross-cultural relationships (Cunningham et al., 2010; Jacobs et al., 2020; LeCrom & Dwyer, 2013), future SFD research could consider exploring how cross-cultural relationships and structured social experiences may be a powerful factor in facilitating participant impact.

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Original Research

Understanding sport as a vehicle to promote positive development among youth with physical disabilities

Amanda McKinnon[1], Rebecca L. Basset- Gutner[2], Jessica Fraser- Thomas[1] & Kelly P. Arbour- Nicitopoulos[2]

[1] York University, Canada
[2] University of Toronto, Canada

Corresponding author email: amckinnon094@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Research has explored the benefits and challenges associated with sport participation among youth with physical disabilities (YWPD), however few studies have attempted to understand how sport may facilitate or hinder positive development. Positive youth development (PYD) is a widely used approach to understand youth development through sport, however limited research exists among YWPD. To address this gap, the study adopted Holt and colleagues' (2017) model of PYD through sport to (a) uncover YWPD's perspectives on the developmental outcomes associated with organized sport participation and (b) understand perceived social-contextual factors influencing these outcomes. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted among YWPD (N = 9; age between 14-21; seven male participants, two female participants). Outcomes discussed were mostly positive, though some participants reported negative outcomes. Participants experienced positive physical, social, and personal outcomes including the development of life skills. Positive outcomes were largely influenced by a sport climate that was supportive and encouraging, facilitated personal growth and athletic development, and promoted a sense of community and connectedness. These findings further our understanding of the utility of organized sport as a context to promote PYD among YWPD, and suggest that fostering experiences of mastery, belonging, challenge, and autonomy may be critically important.

UNDERSTANDING SPORT AS A VEHICLE TO PROMOTE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT AMONG YOUTH WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Sport Participation among Youth with Physical Disabilities

Sport offers a rich context for youth with physical disabilities (YWPD) to gain many physical, social, and psychological health benefits (Martin, 2011; McLoughlin et al., 2017; Murphy & Carbone, 2008; Shapiro & Martin, 2010, 2014; te Velde et al., 2018; Turnnidge et al., 2012). Despite tremendous improvements in sport opportunities following acts such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (Cottingham et al., 2016), YWPD continue to face unique barriers that may limit their participation in sport, the quality of their sport experiences, and the likelihood of favourable outcomes (Bantjes et al., 2015; Jaarsma et al., 2015; McLoughlin et al., 2017; Orr et al., 2018). Factors that have been shown to hinder sport participation and positive sport experiences among YWPD include social isolation and bullying, exclusion, inaccessible premises, and lack of sports aids and adapted activities (Bantjes et al., 2015; Jaarsma et al., 2015; Orr et al., 2018). Negative sport experiences can ultimately jeopardize current and future sport participation among YWPD (Orr et al., 2018). As such, it is critical to foster positive sport experiences to increase the likelihood that YWPD remain engaged in sport and, thus, enjoy the benefits.

The social environment plays an integral role in facilitating positive sport experiences for people with disabilities (Evans et al., 2018; Martin Ginis et al., 2016; Martin & Mushett, 1996; Orr et al., 2018; Shirazipour et al., 2018; Turnnidge et al., 2012). Research focused on understanding optimal parasport participation experiences (e.g., Quality Parasport Participation [QP] Framework; Evans et al., 2018) suggests that parents, peers, and coaches foster the following key elements that make up positive sport experiences among persons with disabilities: mastery (i.e., a sense of competence and accomplishment), challenge (i.e., feeling appropriately tested), belonging (i.e., feeling part of a group or accepted by others), autonomy (i.e., having independence, choice or control), meaning (i.e., working toward a valued goal or having a sense of responsibility to oneself or others) and engagement (i.e., feeling involved, motivated, and focused). For example, sport environments that offer opportunities for peer engagement (i.e., group-based programming), with knowledgeable leaders (Shirazipour et al., 2018) and coaches who are professional, collaborative, and considerate (Allan et al., 2020) have shaped the most positive sport experiences for people with disabilities. Indeed, emerging research guided by the QP framework (Evans et al., 2018) has begun to inform our understanding of factors that may foster quality sport experiences, while other work continues to examine the potential benefits and challenges associated with sport participation among YWPD (Murphy & Carbone, 2008; Shields & Synnot, 2016). However, there has been a call for research to gain a broader understanding of the outcomes associated with sport participation among YWPD (Bragg & Pritchard-Wiart, 2019), as well as the processes through which these outcomes are acquired (Turnnidge et al., 2012).

Positive Youth Development Through Sport

Positive youth development (PYD) is an approach that may be helpful in enhancing our understanding of outcomes and processes related to sport participation among YWPD. PYD is a strength-based approach (Roth et al., 1998) that may be especially valuable in exploring sport participation among YWPD, because it challenges the traditionally dominant construct of disability whereby disability is problematized and persons with disabilities are viewed as objects for intervention (e.g., medical model; Townsend et al., 2015). Instead, through the lens of PYD, sport may be conceptualized as a context through which the unique strengths and abilities of YWPD are harnessed, celebrated, and developed.

The PYD approach has been used widely to understand the developmental outcomes associated with sport participation among youth without disabilities (Fraser-Thomas & Côté,

2009; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Holt & Neely, 2011), as well as the processes through which these outcomes are acquired (Holt et al., 2017; Petitpas et al., 2005). Holt and colleagues' (2017) model of PYD through sport suggests that organized sport participation can lead to the acquisition of positive personal (e.g., positive self-perceptions, perseverance, hard work), social (e.g., independence, leadership, and teamwork skills), and physical outcomes (e.g., fundamental movement skills). The model (i.e., PYD through sport model hereafter) suggests that a positive youth development climate (PYD climate) and a life skills program focus are important factors that, together, may optimize PYD through sport (Holt et al., 2017).

A PYD climate refers to the social-contextual factors (i.e., features of the social environment of sport) that enable youth to gain experiences that promote PYD outcomes (Holt et al., 2017). The PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017) posits that positive adult (e.g., coach) and peer relationships, along with the supportive involvement of parents, can create a positive social environment that is conducive to developing PYD outcomes. A life skills program focus means that activities and techniques are deliberately integrated within the sport curriculum to develop life skills (e.g., establishing high expectations and accountability for behavior, role-modeling desired behaviour, team building activities, and peer mentoring) and transfer activities (e.g., discussions regarding how skills learned through sport can transfer to other contexts; Holt et al., 2017). Sport environments that foster a favourable PYD climate and provide a life skills program focus can promote personal, social, and physical PYD outcomes (Holt et al., 2017). The model also acknowledges the possibility for implicit learning; whereby PYD outcomes can be achieved without a life skills program focus, so long as a PYD climate is fostered (Holt et al., 2017).

Positive Youth Development through Sport for Youth with Disabilities

Although the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017) is not specific to a disability sport context, it considers elements that are relevant to athletes with disabilities. For instance, the concept of PYD climate applies to YWPD, as they may rely heavily on social agents (e.g., parents, peers, and coaches) to facilitate positive sport experiences (Lower-Hoppe et al., 2021; Martin & Whalen, 2014; Shirazipour et al., 2018; Volfson et al., 2020). Furthermore, compared to youth without disabilities, YWPD may face more challenges and have fewer opportunities to develop and practice critical life skills (Kingsnorth et al., 2007). As such, the focus on understanding how sport participation may facilitate life skill development, as well as the

acquisition of personal, social, and physical outcomes, may be particularly relevant and beneficial to explore among YWPD.

There is only one known study that has specifically examined PYD and sport among YWPD. The PYD approach was adopted to examine the sport experiences of athletes with a physical disability (N = 8) participating in a "model" swim program, which was recognized for its elite performance, positive sport environment, and high level of community engagement (Turnnidge et al., 2012). The findings revealed PYD outcomes related to social connectedness and acceptance, improved self-perceptions, and life skill development (e.g., responsibility, leadership, teamwork, and time management skills). Coach-athlete relationships, peer interactions, and the team environment were identified as important factors contributing to PYD outcomes (Turnnidge et al., 2012). Although this study provides initial evidence to suggest that PYD may be used as an approach to understand development through sport among YWPD, findings were limited to a single sport program (i.e., an exemplary competitive swim program; Turnnidge et al. 2012) and, thus, may not be representative of YWPD's experiences in other sport contexts (e.g., other sports and non-competitive environments). The study is further limited by a lack of understanding of possible negative experiences and outcomes among YWPD participating in various sport contexts.

Guided by the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017), the purpose of the current study was to (a) identify the positive and negative developmental outcomes that YWPD acquire from participating in various organized sport contexts, and (b) understand how social-contextual factors influence developmental outcomes.

METHODS

Sampling and Recruitment Methods

All procedures were approved by the research ethics board at the first author's institution. A maximum variation purposive sampling method was used to recruit YWPD from across Ontario, Canada (February 2019 – March 2020) via previous research participant pools (N = 2), partnerships with community organizations (N = 5), and snowball sampling (N = 2). The eligibility criteria included youth: (a) between the ages of 14-21, (b) who self-identified as having a physical disability, (c) who were participating in at least one organized sport program, (d) whose impairment(s) did not prevent oral communication or their capacity to provide informed consent, and (e) who spoke English. Participants up to the age of 21 years were

included to reflect the age at which youth with disabilities transition from child to adult services (including sport programming) within Ontario, Canada (Leo et al., 2018). Sport was defined as any organized and adult supervised, competitive, or recreational sport activity (Holt et al., 2017) taking place outside of regular school hours (i.e., not physical education class).

Participants

Nine YWPD (mean age: 16.4 ± 2.3 years; seven males; two females) agreed to participate and met eligibility criteria. The sample represented nine different sports programs across varying levels of competition, including recreational and competitive at the local, provincial, and national level. Table 1 details demographic and sport information. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. If a participant was under the age of 16, participant assent and informed consent from a parent were obtained. Participation was voluntary, and participants received a $25 honorarium.

Theoretical Framework and Methodological Approach

The PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017) provided a theoretical framework to guide the project through informing the research question, the development of the interview guide, and the data analysis process. The study adopted a relativist ontology and a transactional subjectivist epistemology. Accordingly, data collection and analysis were approached with the assumption that multiple realities exist. In other words, the phenomenon may be interpreted differently based on individuals' perceptions, which are socially and experientially constructed, and knowledge is co-constructed through interactions between the researcher and participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These assumptions were acknowledged within the study design. The section below outlines steps that were taken to ensure findings were interpreted and presented in a way that best reflected participants' experiences (Nowell et al., 2017).

Data Collection

Participants completed a short online questionnaire (SurveyMonkey Inc., San Mateo, California, USA), where informed consent, demographic (e.g., age, sex, nature of their disability), and sport (e.g., type of sport, frequency of participation, and level of competition) information were collected. Participants were then instructed to create a concept map, which prompted them to recall, and write-down key thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to their sport. The concept maps were not used as a form of data analysis, but rather encouraged participants to reflect

Table 1. Participant Demographics and Sport Information

ID	Age (Gender)	Self-identified Physical Disability	Sport(s)	Level	Setting
P1	18(M)	Blind, Left Side Hemiparesis	Swimming Goal Ball	Recreational	Adapted
P2	14(F)	Cerebral Palsy	Swimming	Competitive	Integrated
P3	16(M)	Charcot Marie Tooth Disease	Wheelchair Rugby	National	Adapted
P4	15(M)	Paraplegia	Wheelchair Tennis Adapted Skiing	Recreational	Integrated Adapted
P5	14(M)	Dyskinetic Cerebral Palsy	Adapted Skiing Sledge Hockey	Recreational Competitive	Adapted
P6	17(F)	Left Hemiplegia, Cerebral Palsy	Wheelchair Basketball Track & Field – Throwing	Provincial National	Adapted
P7	15(M)	Hereditary Spastic Paraplegia	Adapted Skiing, Sledge Hockey	Recreational Competitive	Adapted
P8	21(M)	Cerebral Palsy (mild)	Soccer Para Soccer	Varsity National	Mainstream Adapted
P9	18(M)	Mild Physical Deformity (upper extremities)	Adapted Ice Hockey Soccer	Competitive	Adapted

[a] Recreational: non-competitive or for fun. [b] Competitive: some element of competition (e.g., competing in meets, competitions, tournaments). [c] Provincial: competing for Team Ontario. [d] National: competing for Team Canada. [e] Adapted: adaptations or accommodations, participate or compete among athletes with disabilities. [f] Integrated: adaptions or accommodations, participate or compete among athletes with and without disabilities. [g] Mainstream: no adaptations or accommodations, participate or compete among athletes without disabilities

on their sport experiences and served as a memory aid to facilitate discussions during the in-depth interview (Bagnoli, 2009). The concept map was submitted electronically and reviewed by the first author prior to the interview. Participants chose a preferred method (i.e., telephone [n = 5] or video [n = 4]) to complete a semi-structured interview, guided by 10 open-ended questions. The interviews lasted 40-60 minutes each (M = 48). The first question, which referred to participants' concept map, was intended to build rapport and gain a deeper understanding of the concept map (e.g., Can you walk me through the different things you included in your concept map? Why did you choose to include these things?). Subsequent questions were guided by the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017) and expanded on participants' significant positive and negative moments in sport, whether they had learned or gained anything from their experiences, as well as the social-contextual factors that affected their experiences. To remain

consistent with the guiding model, the social-contextual factors under investigation included adult- (i.e., coach and instructor) and peer-relationships, and parent or family involvement. All interviews were conducted by the first author who does not have a physical disability but participated in sport, both at the recreational and competitive level, for twelve years as a child and adolescent. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Three participants chose to have a parent present during the interview; however, parents were encouraged to allow participants to speak for themselves.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was guided by an amended version of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step methodology for thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017), which outlines strategies to establish trustworthiness (e.g., credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) throughout each phase of data analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). This approach also aligns with Braun and Clarke's most recent work, which emphasizes the iterative, reflexive, deliberate, and organic (i.e., non-linear) process that underpins thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Braun et al., 2016). Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and manually coded by the first author. Interview transcripts were compared with original audio-recordings to ensure accuracy of transcription (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We invited participants to engage in the process of member-reflection in an effort to further promote the co-construction of knowledge. Accordingly, prior to commencing the thematic analysis, participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts and take part in any further discussion; eight participants responded and noted that they did not have anything further to share or contribute at that time.

During phase one of data analysis (data familiarization), the first author read through the dataset twice, while actively searching for meaning and patterns. A reflexive journal was kept to document the researchers' reflective thoughts related to a) the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017), b) their own lived experiences, and c) initial ideas for coding (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Nowell et al., 2017). During phase two (generating initial codes), initial codes were deductively generated using concepts related to PYD climate (e.g., peer, parent, and coach relationships), PYD outcomes (e.g., personal, social, and physical), and a life skill program focus (e.g., life skill building and transfer activities; Holt et al., 2017). Given the exploratory nature of the study, the dataset was coded a second time using an inductive approach (Braun et al., 2016), to identify salient codes that may not have been directly related to the PYD through sport model

(Holt et al., 2017). Reflexive journaling was performed and a coding manual was kept to organize codes, descriptions, and data extracts (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Saldaña, 2015). It was through the inductive coding process that the authors recognized themes related to the QP framework, and as such subsequently considered these themes while interpreting the data. During phase three (searching for themes), codes were grouped and sorted into overarching themes and subthemes (Nowell et al., 2017). During phases four (reviewing themes) and five (defining and naming themes), the name, definition, and content of each theme and subtheme was reviewed and discussed with three experts (i.e., co-authors) in the field of PYD, youth sport, and disability research. As part of phase six (producing the report), we once again invited participants to engage in the process of member reflection; we shared the report of the findings with all participants via email, prompting them for any further reflections or feedback. Six participants replied and suggested that the report of the findings was representative of their experiences, sharing no further insights. Although the participants did not provide any further insight, the opportunity to engage in member reflection was an important part of the study protocol because it allowed participants to see their thoughts (transcripts) and the interpretations of the researchers (findings). This process offered YWPD the opportunity to confirm whether the findings resonated with their experiences and perspectives, as well as encouraged them to share alternate interpretations and additional insights (Smith & McGannon, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Two overarching themes were identified with various subthemes. Table 2 provides a summary of the themes and subthemes, and sample participant quotations. The following sections present and discuss the study findings within the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017) while drawing on relevant sport and disability research. The theoretical and pragmatic implications of these findings, as well as future research directions are also considered.

Theme One: Outcomes Acquired Through Sport

Theme one highlights the outcomes that YWPD reported from engaging in sport-related experiences. Outcomes were categorized into the following four subthemes, which were identified deductively based on elements from the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017): a) physical outcomes, b) social outcomes, c) personal outcomes, and d) life skills. Although most of these outcomes were perceived to be positive, it is important to reflect on the negative outcomes that were also disclosed.

Physical Outcomes

YWPD reported that playing sport provided them with opportunities—and in some cases, a reason—to be physically active. Every single participant expressed a desire to continue playing sport or being physically active in the future: "I would still love to do at least one sport, stay active and still socialize with people similar to me" (P7, M, Age 15, Adapted Skiing and Sledge Hockey). This outcome is consistent with the PYD through sport model (Skills for Healthy Active Living, Holt et al., 2017), and supports the notion that sport participation may promote increased physical activity participation among YWPD (Buffart et al., 2008; Marques et al., 2016). Given that physical activity rates among YWPD remain low (Murphy & Carbone, 2008; Woodmansee et al., 2016), this finding highlights the need to leverage organized sport opportunities to promote long-term physical activity participation.

YWPD reported experiencing improvements in strength, balance, and flexibility, which, in some cases, helped improve mobility (walking and wheeling) and mitigate disability-related health problems:

It [swimming] makes me strong, helped with my flexibility. It helped me with my walking as well... and muscle tightening up is one of the problems with cerebral palsy, so it helps for me to not have surgery on my legs (P2, F, Age 14, Swimming).

These findings indicate how participants believed that organized sport participation yielded physical benefits that may have important implications related to improving or maintaining their functional ability and physical independence (e.g., perform activities of daily living; Murphy & Carbone, 2008; Rimmer, 2001; te Velde et al., 2018). This is consistent with previous research highlighting the importance of physical health considerations as motivation for sport participation among some athletes with disabilities (Molik et al., 2010).

Finally, YWPD discussed opportunities to learn and develop a wide range of physical skills related to their sport (e.g., swim strokes) and emphasized the importance of seeing themselves "get better". For example,

We've gotten like skilled enough to be able to play games without the teacher being involved as in like serving it. It can just be between us and I think that's pretty significant because it shows all of the progress we've made and the stuff that we're able to play so I think that's really fun (P4, M, Age 15, Wheelchair Tennis and Adapted Skiing).

Table 2. Themes and subthemes with descriptions and participant quotations

Themes	Subthemes	Participant Quotations
Outcomes Acquired Through Sport The by-product of engaging in sport-related experiences. They occur over time and can be perceived as positive and/or negative.	**Physical Outcomes** - keeping physically active - learning and improving sport-specific skills - not improving [a] - increasing physical fitness (e.g., strength, flexibility, balance) - improving mobility (e.g., walking and wheeling) - mitigating problems associated with disability	I would still love to do at least one sport, stay active and still socialize with people similar to me (P7). We've gotten like skilled enough to be able to play games without the teacher being involved as in like serving it. It can just be between us and I think that's pretty significant because it shows all of the progress we've made and the stuff that we're able to play so I think that's really fun (P4). Another negative would be when I started with like that first tennis program [not adapted], they didn't know what to do with me so it was kind of like they were just giving me exercises that they would give to someone who is able bodied which really didn't help me improve and I was really definitely struggling with that (P4). It [swimming] makes me strong, helped with my flexibility….it helped me with my walking as well… and muscle tightening up is one of the problems with cerebral palsy, so it helps for me to not have surgery on my legs (P2).
	Social Outcomes - developing teamwork and leadership skills - meeting new people and making friends - strengthened feelings of social connection and belonging (e.g., "not alone", feeling part of a team, community, or family) - feeling left out (e.g., feelings of disconnect) [a]	I learned that I can't do it all myself I have to help people succeed by passing the puck or helping them get back up once they fall (P7). And I was able to teach all the young ones too that are just starting out how to play and the rules and tricks around basketball. I feel good being able to help someone else, make them better (P6). I made a lot of friends along the way for my first experiences and so that's… it's because of my friends that I've decided to go along with the rest of the seasons that I had (P9). A positive moment was you know it's not a single moment but for the whole duration of my career I'm part of a community which is great you know I feel at home (P3) Certain struggles that I had with normal people that… well they don't understand what disability I have, and they didn't understand what kind of limitations. And uh… you know kind of left out a little bit (P3).
	Personal Outcomes - learning to work hard, persevere, and maintain a positive attitude - experiencing a sense of independence - developing positive self-perceptions (e.g., feeling confident, competent, proud, important/valued; empowered, and unstoppable) - negative self-perceptions (e.g., incompetent, and embarrassed) and emotions (e.g., frustrated and discouraged) [a]	So in sledge hockey you have to use a lot of ab work to get up once you fall over. And I just completed an accomplishment two weeks ago of getting up by myself. It took a lot of work to do it. I was really focusing on my workout habits to try and accomplish it. I felt great. Once I got up, I felt like I could be a professional player. I felt like no one could get in my way anymore. I felt like I was on top of my disability and nothing could stop me (P7). I played soccer… that didn't go so well but I tried it. – Well you know you have to go on the field and on uneven surfaces and I fall a lot and I'm slow you know… I can't run so I waddled around and chased the ball and didn't get so far (P3). I didn't win anything for the A-champs this weekend because they compared my time to able bodies, so they are still working on it. It's kind of frustrating because it's not fair. And I can't kick and they can (P2).

Table 2. Themes and subthemes with descriptions and participant quotations (ff)

	Life Skills: awareness of how skills learned through sport contributed to (or could contribute to) success in contexts outside of sport (e.g., school, other sports/gym class, and future careers)	I think like the sport soccer itself brings like other things than just having fun to everyday life of everyone. And that's every sport. That could be hockey, that could be uh baseball, basketball anything. Like the sport can bring something else to your life, another dimension that you otherwise wouldn't live through if you didn't play the sport (P8).
		Like socializing. I'm now talking to people that I never would have if I didn't build up the confidence and learn from other people that I played with (P7).
		In sport you have to have a really big positive and open mind to be able to do stuff and accomplish, right? So I think this positivity and accomplishment will help me when I have to go to school in like a month. I'm living in residence at [name of post-secondary institution]. Living alone, trying to accomplish everything, take care of myself. That really makes me really nervous right now thinking about all of that and having to do all of that on my own. Keeping a positive mind and knowing it's gonna be ok and knowing it's gonna work out. And that I have family around if I need them. I've learned that throughout sports just to stay positive, be happy (P6).
PYD Climate The importance of parents, peers, and coaches in shaping a positive social climate that contributed to the outcomes that youth achieved through sport	**Providing Support and Encouragement** - social support through encouragement (e.g., "believing in me", "always being there", "cheering me on") - instrumental support (e.g., assisting with transportation, supplying financial resources)	Well I have a coach that's pretty big on positivity and like making you feel like you can always accomplish something like you can always do it if you try hard enough. He's always encouraging us to do better, to train properly, eat like really good, like do things to make us better (P6).
		One of my swim teammates, [teammate's name], like I was nervous to go off the… sit on the block and do a sitting dive on the block and then I said to my mom I can't do this. And then she [teammate] said, yes you can (P2).
		Umm through my whole experience of playing wheelchair rugby the most important person was my dad. He you know he put out a lot of funds and he drove me like 40 minutes to go to practices and yeah and you know just recently he bought his own rugby chair, and we go to practices together which is really fun (P3).
	Facilitating Athletic Development - acting as an important teacher and role-model - setting high and achievable expectations - being willing and able to provide adaptations	Uh like for me well the national team it was a team of men and I was 14 at the time. So, you can't really be a 14-year-old in a men's team. They [teammates] shepherd me in a way to be more mature, to just realize like ok this is what I'm gonna be in 10-15 years. Like mind as well just work on myself now instead of waiting to like get to that age than then work on myself (P8).
		Well people that umm have my disability that umm… have the same struggles that I do and um seeing them…ya know seeing them is kind of a motivation. They can accomplish such and such and I can do as well, so yeah (P3).
		They [instructors] can modify if it's too challenging for my left hand. For like for our front crawl for example like instead of just moving, circling both my arms out of the water I can just move my weak hand around in the water. When things get modified it makes it easier for me. Makes me feel like I can do everything everyone else can do (P1).

Table 2. Themes and subthemes with descriptions and participant quotations (ff)

Promoting a Sense of Community and Connectedness	I think she's [instructor] there also as a friend… At our lunch time we kinda sit with her, we chat with her, we talk, and we can just… she's there for us" (P4).
- strong and positive coach and peer relationships - participating among "similar peers" (i.e., other YWPD) - parent (or family) involvement (e.g., coach, assistant, participant, spectator)	So I met all these people in track and field and basketball I had more in common with them, I felt like I could relate to them and what they've gone through their whole life. They're life is so similar to mine. So I dunno, we connected more I think than I would have with anyone else (P6) I started skiing when I… last year. I fell in love with it. It was something I can do, my brother can do, and my mom can do. I could ski with them. I just needed a little help, but it was so much fun. I can talk about how the snow was so light and we can all relate to how it feels to be outside in the wilderness skiing, socializing, and having the times of our lives (P7).

[a] Outcomes perceived as negative.

YWPD were able to recognize and appreciate the benefits of physical outcomes and being challenged. In fact, participants felt that a lack of improvement or feeling held back in their athletic development was a negative outcome of their sport experiences. YWPD have previously articulated the need to make progress, feel challenged, and achieve mastery within sport (Bantjes et al., 2015). Sport environments that offer opportunities for YWPD to experience challenge and mastery may be particularly valuable (Evans et al., 2018) and subsequently facilitate meaningful PYD outcomes.

Social Outcomes

According to YWPD, the social environment played a role in facilitating several positive outcomes, including making friends, as well as developing teamwork and leadership skills. For example, YWPD discussed being a team player, collaborating with peers, showing respect, and teaching and helping others. Some participants even expressed a desire to be a role-model for others and to educate people about disability and parasport.

As a 21-year-old like I feel like I could help people show them like, "ok this is what CP [cerebral palsy] looks like, this is what I can tell you about it, and there's people like me in this world that you just have to look out for" (P8, M, Age 21, Soccer).

The social outcomes reported by YWPD resonate with those outlined in the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017). Sport-based PYD literature among youth with (e.g., Turnnidge et al., 2012) and without disabilities (Lower-Hoppe et al., 2021) document the value of relationships and social interactions in promoting outcomes related to teamwork and leadership skills, as was found in this study.

Participants valued the connections and relationships they developed through sport, which were thought to promote feelings of belonging and acceptance. This was evident when YWPD spoke about being part of a community, team, or family: "A positive moment was you know it's not a single moment but for the whole duration of my career I'm part of a community which is great you know I feel at home" (P3, M, Age 16, Wheelchair Rugby). This finding is consistent with previous research identifying belongingness as an outcome associated with sport participation among YWPD (Turnnidge et al., 2012), as well as an important component in fostering positive sport experiences among athletes with disabilities (Evans et al., 2018).

In contrast, some YWPD expressed feeling disconnected or excluded when they experienced difficulties relating to peers or participating in sport. These outcomes were perceived negatively and reported mainly by YWPD who had participated in integrated sport settings (e.g., among peers without disabilities or with varying levels of abilities). One YWPD highlighted, "Certain struggles that I had with normal people that… well they don't understand what disability I have, and they didn't understand what kind of limitations. And uh… you know kind of left out a little bit" (P3, M, Age 16, Wheelchair Rugby).

Although integrated sport settings can benefit both athletes with and without disabilities (Klenk et al., 2019), participating among peers with large differences in abilities may thwart feelings of competence and belonging among YWPD (Shirazipour et al., 2018) and contribute to negative sport experiences (Orr et al., 2018). The present findings underscore the importance of providing YWPD with

opportunities to engage in positive interpersonal interactions through sport, and suggest that experiencing a sense of competence, relatedness, and acceptance could support the development of positive social outcomes.

Personal Outcomes

YWPD believed that sport provided them with opportunities to work towards achieving a goal, overcoming a challenging task (e.g., learning a new skill), and coping with difficult or unpleasant situations (e.g., tough loss, failed attempt, injury). From these experiences, YWPD spoke about learning to work hard, push themselves, persevere, and stay positive. For example,

And for track and field, like never give up almost? Is one of the things I've learned. Because sometimes it can be next to impossible to complete or accomplish but really if you practice every day, every week you'll eventually get there. I didn't think I'd be able to throw past five meters for shot put but now I'm throwing like seven meters like it's not impossible you just have to work really hard towards it (P6, F, Age 17, Wheelchair Basketball and Track & Field – Throwing).

These findings reinforce the notion that when YWPD feel adequately challenged in their sport (i.e., perceive that activities require their best effort, test their limits and push them beyond their comfort zone), they are more likely to have quality experiences (Evans et al., 2018) that may, in turn, promote positive outcomes (Turnnidge et al., 2012).

YWPD reported a greater sense of physical independence from playing sport (e.g., feeling free from constraints and having control over their body and experiences) because it provided them with opportunities to exert their autonomy: "It [skiing] let's me go down the hill at my own pace, at my own speed in my own area" (P5, M, Age 14, Sledge Hockey and Adapted Skiing). Independence is an outcome that has been previously identified by researchers examining sport participation among youth with (Turnnidge et al., 2012) and without disabilities (Holt et al., 2017).

Participants described favourable outcomes associated with experiencing mastery (e.g., accomplishing a goal, learning a skill, and winning), such as feeling confident, proud, empowered, and competent. These feelings seemed to be reinforced when YWPD completed these achievements independently (i.e., without needing assistance from others or support from assistive devices supported these feelings). For example,

So, in sledge hockey you have to use a lot of ab work to get

up once you fall over. And I just completed an accomplishment two weeks ago of getting up by myself. It took a lot of work to do it. I was really focusing on my workout habits to try and accomplish it. I felt great. Once I got up, I felt like I could be a professional player. I felt like no one could get in my way anymore. I felt like I was on top of my disability, and nothing could stop me (P7, M, Age 15, Sledge Hockey and Adapted Skiing).

These findings suggest that participating in organized sport may offer valuable experiences through which YWPD can develop positive self-perceptions and experience a sense of independence, and competence (te Velde et al., 2018; Turnnidge et al., 2012). However, YWPD indicated that experiences which limited their ability to improve or successfully participate and compete contributed to negative self-perceptions (e.g., embarrassment and incompetence) and emotions (e.g., frustration and discouragement): "I didn't win anything for the A-champs this weekend because they compared my time to able bodies, so they are still working on it. It's kind of frustrating because it's not fair. And I can't kick, and they can" (P2, F, Age 14, Swimming). Similar experiences have been shown to hinder sport participation and thwart perceptions of autonomy and competence among YWPD (Orr et al., 2018).

Overall, the positive outcomes discussed are consistent with the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017) and seem to highlight the importance of enabling YWPD to feel appropriately challenged, successful, and autonomous within sport (Evans et al., 2018; Shirazipour et al., 2018) as a potential strategy for promoting PYD outcomes.

Life Skills

The previous sections illustrate that playing sport provided YWPD with many opportunities to develop and practice important skills within sport. Importantly, all participants recognized that the skills they learned through sport had helped (or could help) them succeed in different areas outside of sport (e.g., school, personal life, other sports and physical education class, and future careers). For example, one participant credited his ability to interact and socialize with others, to learning from his teammates and building his confidence through sport: "I'm now talking to people that I never would have if I didn't build up the confidence and learn from other people that I played with" (P7, M, Age 15, Sledge Hockey and Adapted Skiing). Another participant made the connection between learning to be positive and open-minded in sport, and how it would help her in her transition to post-secondary education:

In sport you have to have a really big positive and open

mind to be able to do stuff and accomplish, right? So, I think this positivity and accomplishment will help me when I have to go to school in like a month. I'm living in residence at [name of post-secondary institution]. Living alone, trying to accomplish everything, take care of myself. That really makes me really nervous right now thinking about all of that and having to do all of that on my own. Keeping a positive mind and knowing it's gonna be ok and knowing it's gonna work out. And that I have family around if I need them. I've learned that throughout sports just to stay positive, be happy (P6, F, Age 17, Wheelchair Basketball and Track & Field – Throwing).

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Turnnidge et al., 2012), these findings demonstrate a link between sport participation and life skill development among YWPD and highlight the importance of social factors within the sport context (Holt et al., 2017; Lower-Hoppe et al., 2021). Life skills are conceptualized as 'internal personal assets, characteristics, and skills such as goal setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in sport and transferred for use in non-sport settings' (Gould & Carson, 2008, p. 60). This finding adds to existing disability sport research by providing evidence that organized sport participation may facilitate life skill transfer among YWPD, which is an essential component of life skill development (Pierce et al., 2017). However, YWPD did not elaborate on how they learned to make these connections, suggesting that life skill transfer may have occurred implicitly (e.g., in the absence of life skill transfer activities; Holt et al., 2017). It is possible that participants may have been unaware of specific strategies utilized by their coaches to teach life skill transfer (e.g., discussions or debriefs regarding how skills learned through sport can transfer to other contexts; Holt et al., 2017). As such, explicit learning should not be ruled out and should be further explored. Future research should examine the perspectives of YWPD and their coaches to further an understanding of how life skill development and transfer are facilitated through sport.

In sum, YWPD highlighted positive outcomes that aligned with the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017). Our findings extend previous research among YWPD (Turnnidge et al., 2012) by suggesting that organized sport has the potential to facilitate life skill transfer, as well as contribute to unfavourable outcomes among YWPD (i.e., negative emotions, negative self-perceptions and feeling left out). In each of the outcome themes, YWPD highlighted the influence of parents, peers, and coaches, as well as experiences that fostered independence, success, relatedness, and challenge; suggesting that these experiential elements may be instrumental in promoting

PYD outcomes. These findings align with the notion of PYD climate (Holt et al., 2017) and share conceptual links with elements of mastery, challenge, belonging, and autonomy from the QP framework (Evans et al., 2018).

Theme Two: PYD Climate - The Importance of Parents, Peers, and Coaches

Theme two reflects the roles that parents, peers, and coaches played in shaping a social climate that contributed to the outcomes that YWPD acquired through sport. Theme two is comprised of the following three subthemes: a) providing support and encouragement, b) facilitating athletic development, and c) promoting a sense of community and connectedness.

Providing Support and Encouragement

Consistent with the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017), participants expressed that important social agents (i.e., parents, peers, and coaches) created a supportive environment by believing in them, "always being there", providing words of encouragement (e.g., cheering), and recognizing their achievements. According to YWPD, this type of social support facilitated PYD outcomes through bolstered feelings of competence, belonging, and enjoyment:

Well, you know it influences my sport career significantly… if I had not had a great father, great coaches, and great teammates I would have never wanted to play this sport because you know, it's ya… um they all you know they support me. They help out and make me feel part of a community which is a big part of my playing experience (P3, M, Age 16, Wheelchair Rugby).

Indeed, coaches provided an important source of support and encouragement, which was illustrated by the way athletes spoke about their coaches and/or instructors believing in them, always being there, and making them feel like they could accomplish anything. As one athlete explained:

Well I have a coach that's pretty big on positivity and like making you feel like you can always accomplish something like you can always do it if you try hard enough. He's always encouraging us to do better, to train properly, eat like really good, like do things to make us better (P6, F, Age 17, Wheelchair Basketball and Track & Field – Throwing).

This finding resonates with research among with (Turnnidge et al., 2012) and without disabilities (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009), which suggests that supportive

coaches can bolster athletes' perceptions of competence by believing in them and expressing confidence in their abilities. YWPD also reported that peers positively impacted their sport experiences by providing an important source of social support through encouragement. For example,

One of my swim teammates, [teammate's name], like I was nervous to go off the… sit on the block and do a sitting dive on the block and then I said to my mom I can't do this. And then she [teammate] said, yes you can (P2, F, Age 14, Swimming).

This type of support has been shown to benefit the sport experiences of YWPD by enhancing their sense of connectedness with peers (e.g., displaying genuine care for each other's success and accomplishments), as well as by helping them take on challenging tasks and overcome difficult situations (Turnnidge et al., 2012), which was also evident among YWPD in the current study.

Participants specifically commented about the unwavering support of parents (and family) through transportation, financial support (e.g., buying equipment), searching for sport opportunities, and involvement as a coach, assistant, spectator, or participant. According to YWPD, this support led to reassurance in their ability to participate safely, confidently, and successfully:

They [parents] supported me through games, they sat through horrible weather to watch me play. And just like their dedication and their support made me like, "k I'm doing the right thing by playing this sport" because they're not like not showing up you know what I mean? Like they're there coming to games, they're supporting me and stuff like that and that helped me to be like, "ok I can play the sport how I want to play, because I have people behind me that support me regardless" (P8, M, Age 21, Soccer).

 The PYD through sport model suggests that parent involvement may reinforce PYD by complementing and supporting the delivery of sport programs (e.g., engaging in discussions that help reinforce skills and lessons learned through sport; Holt et al., 2017). Comparatively, YWPD highlighted the importance of parent support and involvement in terms of facilitating positive sport experiences and directly affecting access to quality sport opportunities (Bloemen et al., 2015; Canadian Disability Participation Project, 2018a; Turnnidge et al., 2012; Wickman, 2015). Accordingly, parents may have reinforced PYD by creating opportunities for quality sport participation that may have otherwise been unfeasible.

These findings highlight the value of positive and supportive coach and peer relationships, as well as healthy parent involvement within sport (Holt et al., 2017), as this may promote PYD outcomes through strengthened feelings of competence, belonging, and enjoyment. Although supportive relationships are important to facilitate PYD outcomes among all youth sport participants (Holt et al., 2017), this work highlights the critical nature of this support for YWPD and speaks to the nuanced nature of support relationships for YWPD participating in sport (Javorina et al., 2021). Resources that support parents and coaches in facilitating positive relationships are desired and may help them to foster inclusive environments that optimize participation and outcomes for YWPD (Javorina et al., 2021).

Facilitating Athletic Development

YWPD explained that coaches and peers facilitated athletic development by creating opportunities to feel appropriately challenged, independent, and successful. According to participants, coaches contributed to several positive outcomes by setting high and achievable expectations, being attentive to the needs and abilities of YWPD, and providing assistance or adapting activities accordingly. For example,

They [instructors] can modify if it's too challenging for my left hand. For like for our front crawl for example, like instead of just moving, circling both my arms out of the water I can just move my weak hand around in the water. When things get modified it makes it easier for me. Makes me feel like I can do everything everyone else can do (P1, M, Age 18, Swimming and Goal Ball).

When coaches can effectively assess and respond to the needs and abilities of athletes, they create safe and enjoyable opportunities for YWPD to test their limits, exert their independence, and experience success, which can foster positive self-perceptions, competence, and autonomy (Bloemen et al., 2015; Orr et al., 2018; Shirazipour et al., 2018; Turnnidge et al., 2012). Many of these experiential aspects of sport participation are highlighted in the QP framework (e.g., mastery, autonomy, challenge; Evans et al., 2018). In some cases, coaches may have contributed to negative outcomes (e.g., feeling frustrated, discouraged, embarrassed, left out) when they failed to provide appropriate adaptations, set low expectations, or made assumptions about the abilities of their athletes. For example,

They [coaches] think that they… that I cannot do stuff that I can try to do. And they lower the bar of expectations. My

mom pushes me harder than my coaches do because they think I can't do it. I think I would do much better if they pushed me harder like my mom does (P2, F, Age 14, Swimming).

Such negative experiences can jeopardize sport participation among YWPD by thwarting perceptions of autonomy, belongingness, and competence (Bantjes et al., 2015; Orr et al., 2018) which are highlighted in the QP framework as foundational to positive sport experiences for people with disabilities (Evans et al., 2018). Developing strong, positive coach-athlete relationships may be critically important in helping coaches get to know their athletes' abilities and goals to ensure that expectations are set at a level that is appropriate for YWPD (Canadian Disability Participation Project, 2018a).

YWPD in the study described receiving important guidance, support, and feedback from peers, as well as experiencing opportunities to develop teamwork and leadership skills (e.g., teaching and helping others). They also noted that seeing peers perform skills or achieve goals motivated them to push themselves, work hard, and take on challenges:

Well people that umm have my disability that umm… have the same struggles that I do and um seeing them…ya know seeing them is kind of a motivation. They can accomplish such and such and I can do as well, so yeah (P3, M, Age 16, Wheelchair Rugby).

Indeed, coaches and peers can create opportunities for YWPD to experience challenge, autonomy, and mastery within sport (Evans et al., 2018; Shirazipour et al., 2018; Turnnidge et al., 2012). Sport contexts that encourage peer leadership and role-modeling can positively impact youth development (Eccles et al., 2003; Fujimoto et al., 2018; Holt et al., 2017). As such, it may be critical to ensure that coaches possess the skills, training, and supports necessary to facilitate these experiences, as well as to encourage opportunities for peer-leadership and role-modeling within sport, as a means of shaping a PYD climate that promotes positive outcomes.

Promoting a Sense of Community and Connectedness

Strong and enduring peer relationships are thought to contribute to the creation of a PYD climate by fostering "feelings of belonging to a wider community" (Holt et al., 2017, p. 33). YWPD indicated that strong peer- and coach-relationships, as well as parental involvement, promoted a sense of community (i.e., belonging to something "bigger than oneself") and connectedness. For example, YWPD

revealed that coaches contributed to a sense of belonging by being kind, relatable, and expressing an interest in getting to know and connect with their athletes. "I think she's there also as a friend [instructor] … At our lunch time we kinda sit with her, we chat with her, we talk and we can just… she's there for us" (P4, M, Age 15, Wheelchair Tennis and Adapted Skiing).

Coaches have been shown to foster feelings of social connection and belonging among athletes with disabilities by developing supportive and caring coach-athlete relationships (Shirazipour et al., 2017). Furthermore, there is a link between athletic competence and peer acceptance (Jones et al., 2011) such that coaches may have also promoted a sense of belonging by creating opportunities for YWPD to feel enabled and competent.

YWPD felt a sense of belonging when they engaged in shared experiences with peers (e.g., playing and having fun together, celebrating each other's success). Many participants explained that feelings of belonging were enhanced when they participated among "similar peers" (i.e., also living with a disability), because they could more easily relate to them.

So, I met all these people in track and field and basketball I had more in common with them, I felt like I could relate to them and what they've gone through their whole life. Their life is so similar to mine. So, I dunno, we connected more I think than I would have with anyone else (P6, F, Age 17, Wheelchair Basketball and Track & Field—Throwing).

There is value in providing opportunities for athletes with disabilities to participate among peers who share similar experiences and impairments, as these could foster a greater acceptance and understanding within the sport environment (Turnnidge et al., 2012), and thus enhance perceptions of belonging (Shirazipour et al., 2018). YWPD also expressed enjoyment in having parents and family members actively involved in their sport experience (e.g., as a coach, trainer, spectator, or participant), because it created opportunities for them to spend time and have fun together.

I started skiing when I… last year. I fell in love with it. It was something I can do, my brother can do, and my mom can do. I could ski with them; I just needed a little help, but it was so much fun. I can talk about how the snow was so light and we can all relate to how it feels to be outside in the wilderness skiing, socializing, and having the times of our lives (P7, M, Age 15, Sledge Hockey and Adapted Skiing).

In addition to facilitating participation, parent (and family)

support and involvement can promote feelings of social connection and belonging within sport (Evans et al., 2018; Shirazipour et al., 2017; Turnnidge et al., 2012). Consistent with the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017), belongingness may be an essential component of a sport context that promotes PYD outcomes among YWPD. Furthermore, a sense of belonging may provide YWPD with positive sport experiences that facilitate optimal outcomes (Evans et al., 2018) and may be achieved through experiences that cultivate strong connections with peers, as well as with coaches, and parents.

The Future of PYD Through Sport among YWPD, an Integrated Approach?

This study adds to the limited current literature by suggesting that PYD may provide a viable approach for understanding development through sport among YWPD. Although the PYD through sport model (Holt et al., 2017) served as the guiding framework for the current study, the participants highlighted elements of mastery, belonging, challenge, and autonomy from the QP framework (Evans et al., 2018), which may be critical to consider in pursuing further understanding of sport outcomes and experiences among YWPD. For instance, integrating QP concepts (e.g., mastery, challenge, autonomy, belonging) with traditional PYD models (e.g., Holt et al., 2017) may uncover mechanisms of PYD facilitation specific to YWPD. As such, future research may consider exploring the QP framework in the context of PYD. Perhaps when parents, peers, and coaches foster "quality experiences" (i.e., opportunities to experience a sense of belonging, mastery, autonomy, challenge, meaning, and engagement; Evans et al., 2018), they create a PYD climate through which YWPD can gain positive outcomes. In contrast, YWPD may experience negative outcomes if the social climate of sport does not support these aspects of quality participation. The QP framework primarily focuses on understanding the processes that promote quality parasport participation (Evans et al., 2018). The current study also extends the utility of the QP framework by identifying potential outcomes that may result from fostering or hindering quality participation. An integrated approach may further an understanding of the experiences that contribute to an optimal climate through which YWPD can develop PYD outcomes, as well as uncover the potential positive outcomes that come from fostering "quality experiences" through sport.

Pragmatically, there may be value in adopting an integrated approach to explore PYD through sport among YWPD. For instance, the Blueprint for Building Quality Participation in Sport for Children, Youth, and Adults with a Disability

(2018) is an evidence-based tool grounded in principles from the QP framework that was developed to inform program builders (e.g., administrators, coaches and policy makers) about strategies to foster belonging, autonomy, mastery, challenge, engagement, and meaning in sport (Canadian Disability Participation Project, 2018b). Since this tool has been used to inform programs that promote quality sport experiences, a novel first step could be to assess its use in promoting positive outcomes among YWPD within the context of a PYD framework (e.g., Holt and colleagues' model; 2017).

Strengths, Limitations and Future Research Considerations

A major strength of the current study was the diversity of participants' sport experiences. The diverse experiences allowed for consideration of outcomes across a wide range of sports (e.g., goalball, wheelchair basketball, rugby, and tennis, adapted skiing, sledge hockey, swimming, track and field and soccer) and levels (e.g., recreational, competitive, provincial, and national). Furthermore, findings were drawn from participants' positive and negative sport experiences, which broadens an understanding of how sport participation may promote or hinder positive development among YWPD.

Because the sample did not include YWPD who withdrew from sport, the findings may have been positively biased. To address this limitation and expand on the potential factors hindering PYD through sport, it would be valuable to hear the voices of YWPD who had particularly negative experiences and withdrew from sport. It would also be interesting to understand the similarities (and differences) in youth and adult parasport experiences. Future research should also look to further contextualize the sport experiences of YWPD in relation to aspects of various sport programs (e.g., age of peers/teammates, level of experience of coaches). It was beyond the scope of the current study to understand the impact of individual (e.g., level of impairment or disability) and broader contextual factors on PYD (e.g., institutional, community, and policy). These factors likely contribute to parasport experiences and outcomes (Martin Ginis et al., 2016) and future research should examine how these factors may facilitate or hinder PYD through sport among YWPD. It may be valuable to explore the perspectives of parents and program providers, alongside those of YWPD, to gain insight regarding how the availability and accessibility of sport programs (e.g., parents' perspective) and program design and delivery (e.g., program provider's perspective) may influence YWPD sport experiences and outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the sport experiences of YWPD through a PYD lens to understand outcomes associated with organized sport participation and the social-contextual factors influencing these outcomes. Findings suggest that organized sport may serve as a context through which YWPD can experience a wide range of positive outcomes, including life skill development and transfer, provided that a PYD climate is in place and experiences of mastery, autonomy, challenge, and belonging are fostered. Furthermore, this study supports the use of PYD as a viable approach for enhancing an understanding of how organized sport participation may contribute to positive or negative developmental outcomes among YWPD. Since the study findings shared strong conceptual links with the QP framework (Evans et al., 2018), it is encouraged that future research adopt an integrated approach to inform a better understanding of how organized sport can be utilized as a vehicle to promote PYD among YWPD.

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Original Research

Diving into a new era: The role of an international sport event in fostering peace in a post-conflict city

Jada W. Lindblom[1], Eric Legg[2] & Christine A. Vogt[2]

[1] University of New Hampshire, USA
[2] Arizona State University, USA

Corresponding author email: jada.lindblom@asu.edu

ABSTRACT

This article investigates community development and social impacts of hosting an international sport event in a post-war city still marred by social divisions and internal conflict. Focusing on the case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, this research examines resident perceptions of the recurrent Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series event. The framework of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) guides this inquiry toward understanding how sport events can help facilitate greater unity and peace in transitional settings experiencing persistent social divisions. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with residents are supported by findings from a resident survey. The findings illustrate how sport events can help to transform communities in line with SDP goals by fostering spaces for social cohesion, generating collective pride, and offering new senses of possibility and opportunity for the city. These outcomes can occur even if the event organization is not explicitly driven by an SDP mission. Perceptions of trust and neutrality are important factors in how community members assess the event and its organizing body. This research highlights the role of international sport events in community development and calls attention to the importance of understanding local context and engaging a broad range of community members.

DIVING INTO A NEW ERA: THE ROLE OF AN INTERNATIONAL SPORT EVENT IN FOSTERING PEACE IN A POST-CONFLICT CITY

Sport events can create powerful spaces for unity as well as division, contributing to senses of social progress or reinforcing social divides between populations. Though research suggests that sport has the ability to bring together diverse groups of people (Dyreson, 2003; Spencer, 2011), sport events may also emphasize differences and divisions between geographic or social populations, such as between classes (Grodecki & Kossakowski, 2021; Jarvie, 2011) or team supporters (Bertoli, 2017; Šuligoj & Kennell, 2021). Positive and negative social impacts from sport may occur simultaneously (Spaaij, 2009). Although cities can experience economic and social benefits from hosting larger and/or international sport events, these events may also be perceived as disruptive to the community and local environment (Fredline, 2005; Kim et al., 2006, 2015). Much research on community impacts of sport events has focused on "mega-events" (e.g., Olympic Games), yet smaller international sport events including tours (multiple-destination event series) and other shorter-duration engagements may also lead to social impacts such as enhanced national pride, unity, and euphoria, potentially with fewer negative community impacts (Taks et al., 2015).

Though a sizable body of research has investigated community impacts of sport events, limited studies have

investigated how sport events may be conducive to community development goals in post-war and post-conflict regions, including places facing ongoing internal social divisions and disharmony across ethnic enclaves. In seeking peace and economic recovery, such places are positioned to experience significant transformative benefits as event hosts. On an international stage, a sport event may help present a blighted city in positive light, facilitating senses of pride, hope, and possibility amongst residents. Moreover, sport event emphases on socialization, fun, and enjoyment can create positive environments for facilitating unity and togetherness in ways that may lessen intergroup tensions and conflicts (Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2010). However, such benefits may have limited demographic reach depending upon who participates (Mitchell et al., 2020).

Events are an important aspect of programs oriented toward Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), which has been defined as the "use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialization of children, youths and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution" (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011, p. 311). Large sport events have been viewed as means to advance certain policy agendas; the United Nations, notably, promotes sports as means to achieve a broad range of social outcomes, including peace and conflict resolution (Toscano & Molgaray, 2021). As noted, however, it is common for sport events to contribute to social division, calling for greater inquiry into the conditions that determine social unity outcomes.

With these contrasting points in mind, the researchers inductively sought to understand residents' perceptions of a recurrent sport event, its community impacts, and how the event could be leveraged to serve community development interests. A post-war city, growing as a tourism destination yet still encumbered by notable social divisions, provides a rich social context to consider the role of sport events in conflict recovery. The researchers centered this investigation upon the following question: can an international sport event produced by an externally located, multinational, commercial organization contribute to the facilitation of peace and social cohesion in a host city? If so, what characteristics of the event play key roles in helping to achieve positive social impact outcomes? With interests in understanding broad themes in residents' perceptions as well as the nuances of individuals' observations and perspectives, the researchers employed a mixed-methods approach. This inquiry of sport events, social cohesion, and peace begins with a literature review along two primary themes: sport events for social impact and community

benefits of hosting international sport events.

Literature Review

Leveraging Sport Events for Social Impact

Chalip (2006), one of the earlier scholars to call research attention to the social value of sport events, suggests that in order to maximize positive social outcomes sport events should be intentionally planned to foster social interaction, prompt feelings of celebration through sociability, facilitate informal social opportunities, provide ancillary events and social opportunities, and theme the event. Chalip brings attention to "the alteration of communal affect," i.e., "liminality," that can result from the energies of the event's communal atmosphere. Importantly, Chalip notes that liminality can provide participants with a "safe place and time to explore otherwise contentious social concerns" (p. 111). Since Chalip's initial call, a growing body of literature has begun to examine how to leverage sport events for social impact (e.g., Djaballah et al., 2015; Welty Peachey et al., 2013; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012). Results, however, have been unclear. For example, an examination of the impact of the Major League Baseball All-Star game in Kansas City revealed a post-event increase in social capital (Oja et al., 2018), contrary to the findings of Gibson et al. (2014) who reported slight decreases or no changes across five dimensions of social capital following the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. Different research on this same event found that the importance of ethnic identity to social cohesion decreased following the sport event (Heere et al., 2016), which could be beneficial to social capital. Local attendees may perceive greater social impact from a sport event if they perceive that it exhibits greater social responsibility and a sense of camaraderie (Inoue & Havard, 2014).

Much of the existing research highlights the importance of intentionality as a precondition of positive outcomes (Schulenkorf et al., 2016). Without strategic planning, impacts are haphazard and left largely to luck (Taks et al., 2015). Though intentional design is certainly likely to maximize the potential for positive impacts, sport may be associated with community development even when lacking intentionality, particularly for large-scale sport events that may have secondary impact. The existing research is mixed on the relationship between sport events and community development outcomes (Gibson et al., 2014; Oja et al., 2018), and thus more research is needed to better understand potential impacts.

Social impact may be especially desirable in places impacted by conflict or disaster. Prior research has

identified a need for more case-specific research examining the social impacts of sport events in places in stages of regeneration in order to better understand potential economic and social benefits for host cities (Wise & Perić, 2016). In an early investigation of SDP themes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Gasser and Levinsen (2004) describe means by which youth football clubs may transcend the sport's war-related associations and be used instead to create social unity, a strategy that has been similarly applied in Israel (Sugden, 2008). Research examining ethnonational tensions in the capital city of Sarajevo suggests that participatory sport organizations can play valuable roles in constructing narratives that help allay social divisions (Maslic, 2019).

Community Benefits of Hosting International Sports Events

Large-scale sport events have the capacity to generate a broad range of community social impacts. Factors contributing to residents' perceptions of social impacts may include economic benefits, community pride, community development, economic costs, traffic problems, and security risks (Kim et al., 2015). Residents tend to be cognizant of community benefits and are willing to cope with some degree of negative impacts if the expected positive outcomes seem worthwhile (Jackson, 2008). By hosting special events, communities may be able to build economic opportunities, bring community members together, facilitate spaces for socialization, and offer educational opportunities for visitors (Xie & Sinwald, 2016). Engaging respected individuals and institutions in the host region can be crucial in leveraging the social and cultural community benefits of sport events (Schulenkorf & Schlenker, 2017).

One of the more substantial longer-term benefits of hosting special events can be the creation of community pride (Deery & Jago, 2010). International sport event research from Croatia suggests that residents' perceptions of the dimensions of community development and community pride are closely intertwined (Perić, 2018). However, community benefits related to pride may be overstated, and some events may generate impacts more effectively than others (Storm & Jakobson, 2020). The extent to which hosting a sport event contributes to enhanced senses of unity or positive perceptions of national identity has varied across cases, and these benefits may not be long-lasting, particularly for single-occurrence events (Heere et al., 2013). Pride and esteem can have both positive and negative implications in terms of sports and fan engagement (Decrop & Derbaix, 2010), and competitions may aggravate existing inter-group conflicts, particularly when competing nations have a history of conflict (Deery & Jago, 2010).

International events such as the Olympics may create an experiential environment imbued with nationalistic messaging (Closs Stephens, 2016).

Conversely, sport events may also serve to create positively affective communal spaces. For instance, research pertaining to the 2014 FIFA World Cup found that the event's celebrative atmosphere was conducive to enhancing residents' subjective well-being (Schlegel et al., 2017). Hosting the Olympic Games has been associated with feelings of euphoria and elation amongst city residents (Waitt, 2003). With intentionality, sport events can potentially leverage the facilitation of celebratory atmospheres to achieve sport-for-development outcomes (Welty Peachey et al., 2015).

Community benefits of hosting sport events are often linked to tourism-based benefits. Public perceptions of sport event image can positively impact destination image (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007), but promotional benefits of hosting large sports events may be optimistically overestimated (Teigland, 1999). In transitional settings like post-conflict destinations, hosting sport tourism events has been found amongst residents to be associated with enhanced feelings of community ties, perceptions of national identity, and increased senses of pride in one's country (Pranić et al., 2012), and is often considered instrumental in regeneration or revitalization efforts (Wise & Harris, 2017).

Location and Event Background

This research focuses on the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series event in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mostar is a city rich with natural and cultural assets, but also notorious for internal conflict. Between 1992 to 1995, the city experienced some of the worst destruction and casualties of the Bosnian War (Bollens, 2007). At various stages, the city's Serb, Croat, and Bosniak populations, along with outside forces, fought against one another. In 1993, Stari Most ("the Old Bridge"), a UNESCO World Heritage site long associated with the city's Muslim Bosniak population, was destroyed by shelling from Croat forces. With the destruction of the bridge and other historic structures, Mostar's heritage and place image were greatly damaged (Wise, 2020). The bridge stood in disrepair for many years before its rebuild was completed in 2004. The city's population has remained largely geographically and socially divided between its ethnic-religious groups, although signs of change and unification have gradually begun to surface (Carabelli, 2018). The river has commonly been considered a geographical divider between the city's two main subpopulations (Catholic Croats, mainly in West Mostar, and Muslim Bosniaks, mainly in East Mostar),

positioning the river and the bridge as potent sites for memories, associations, and symbolism, as well as contemporary tourism intrigue (Forde, 2016). For over four centuries, this 24-meter-high stone footbridge has hosted a tradition of high diving, practiced mainly by younger men from East Mostar. Today, this provides a tourism highlight.

Noting the bridge's suitability for high diving and its uniquely picturesque setting above the Neretva River, the Red Bull organization first included Mostar on its World Series tour in 2015, continuing through 2022 (cancelled in 2020). The seasonal Red Bull tour typically consists of eight global stops, and Mostar is one of few to have maintained a regular spot on the tour. In Mostar, attendees from around the world crowd beneath the Old Bridge to watch an internationally diverse field of male and female competitors. The event weekend includes auxiliary events and activities such as a free, public music festival in the Old City featuring regional bands and performers. Red Bull, an energy drink brand known globally for its branded action sport events, uses the inspirational motto "giving wings to people and ideas" to describe both its products and sport events (Red Bull, 2022), but is not explicitly driven by social impact priorities in its competition programming. The tour has historically included a wide variety of destinations, some others which have also had histories of conflict (e.g., Dubrovnik, Beirut).

Two prior studies have examined community impacts of Red Bull sport events. Research on the Red Bull Cliff Diving competition in the Azores (Avelar et al., 2020) suggested that the event was broadly associated with positive tourism and economic development impacts and some perceived social and cultural development benefits. Research investigating a Red Bull-sponsored surfing event in South Africa (Ntloko & Swart, 2008) found support for a variety of community impacts, including entertainment value for residents, economic boost for local businesses, regional promotion, and facilitation of a sense of community pride; however, management considerations such as a lack of local representation in planning processes reflected community-level concerns pertaining to social and environmental impacts. Although the South African research provides some insights into event impacts in a place with history of segregation, neither of these previous studies specifically inquired about sport event impacts in a city aiming to recover from war or conflict.

METHODOLOGY

This mixed-methods research employs a pragmatic worldview to address the research problem through utilizing a diverse toolbox of research approaches and data (Morgan,

2007). The central method of phenomenology-based, in-depth interviewing is bolstered by preliminary survey findings toward understanding the event's community social impacts, reflective of both broad and nuanced aspects of residents' perceptions. The sequential explanatory design allowed researchers to first develop a broader, contextual understanding of adult residents' ($N = 408$) perceptions of tourism and community development in Mostar, based upon common variables used in the literature. Next, a smaller panel ($N = 14$) of residents participated in a series of three interviews each, employing Seidman's (2013) phenomenological interviewing process. Research was conducted in Fall 2019.

Quantitative Methods

A questionnaire was designed to gain an understanding about residents' perceptions of community development via sport events and tourism in Mostar. The instrument included general questions as well as items specific to the Red Bull event. Four questions pertained to perceived community impacts were adopted from the social impacts of hosting sport events scale developed and validated by Kim et al. (2015; adapted from Crompton, 2004). The survey was administered in the local language (Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian) following translation and back-translation by native speakers and a pilot test completed by five residents. Sampling was conducted using a probabilistic cluster approach with a predetermined list of public locations across different neighborhoods of the city (e.g., parks, plazas, shopping areas) during different times of day. At each location, the researcher (assisted by a local translator) invited all adult residents (18 years or older) present at that time to participate. The survey was described as focusing on tourism and events, rather than sports specifically. About 40% of those approached agreed to participate, resulting in 408 valid questionnaires. The respondents identified as 54% male and 46% female, with 63% being under the age of 35. Fifty-five percent were from eastern neighborhoods, 37% were from western neighborhoods, and 8% were from other areas (i.e., suburbs/villages). Data were analyzed using SPSS v.22.

Qualitative Methods

For the interviews, the population was delimited to younger adult residents of Mostar, reflecting a specific interest in understanding perceptions of residents who grew up in the aftermath of war and represent the city's future workforce, governance, and socio-cultural composition. Snowball sampling began with outreach at the local universities. Participants were required to have at least conversational proficiency in English, which is relatively common amongst younger residents. Nine women and five men (Mage = 27; R

= 18-42; Table 1) from a variety of neighborhoods and interests/professions completed the interview process with the same female, international researcher. Participants' personal involvement in sport varied from very little to primary occupation. Using Seidman's (2013) three-interview approach, each interview had a different focus: first, the participant's life history and backstory (e.g., life in Mostar, family background, education and profession, personal hobbies and interests); second, the participant's experiences with the phenomena being studied (the Red Bull event, as positioned within the broader context of events, tourism, leisure activities, and social interaction in Mostar); and third, reflection and follow-up. Interviews occurred over the course of one week. The three-interview format provided the researcher with opportunities to build rapport and intentionally revisit earlier themes and responses. This repetition, paired with comparative insights from the survey, helped enable an iterative and ongoing attention to the data, as has been recommended in qualitative, leisure-focused research to enhance trustworthiness (Rose & Johnson, 2020).

Table 1. Overview of interview participants

Name*	Gender	Age	Home neighborhood	Primary occupation	Personal engagement with event	Preferred activities and interests
Mirjana	Female	18	West Mostar	Student	Watched on TV/internet	Coffee with friends, park and riverside walks with friends
Lucija	Female	18	West Mostar	Student	Seen video clips only	Socializing at cafes and clubs, walks around the city with friends
Amin	Male	19	East Mostar	Athlete	Attended in person	Playing basketball (on city's team), hiking, outdoor sports, enjoying the city with friends
Karlo	Male	19	West Mostar	Student	Attended in person	Cycling, outdoor recreation, hanging out with friends
Vedad	Male	20	East Mostar	Student	Watched on TV/internet	Socializing, playing music, studying
Esma	Female	20	Southeastern village	Student	Attended in person	Reading, movies, spending time with family, taking educational classes
Ivana	Female	24	West Mostar	Student/tour guide	Watched on TV/internet	Going to bars and clubs with friends, cinema, traveling, watching TV
Eva	Female	28	West Mostar	Salesperson	Seen video clips only	Going to nightclubs with friends, spending time with family
Katarina	Female	33	Western village	Teacher	Watched on TV/internet	Coffee with family and friends, watching movies, reading, crafts
Dragica	Female	35	West Mostar	Accountant	Watched on TV/internet	Dancing, learning foreign languages, cinema, coffee
Aldin	Male	35	Central Mostar	Teacher	Attended in person	Traditional dancing, music, gaming, traditional coffee
Alma	Female	35	East Mostar	Office worker	Attended in person	Hiking, climbing, outdoors, coffee with friends
Tarik	Male	36	East Mostar	Hospitality	Attended in person	Spending time at cafes with friends, music, watching TV, regional travel
Lana	Female	42	West/Central Mostar	International business	Attended in person	Dining out, gym workouts, movies and theater, spas, traveling

*All names have been changed.

Applying an inductive approach, the researchers recorded, transcribed, and analyzed the interview data using MAXQDA software, applying Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Van Kaam technique for phenomenological research. This technique facilitates an in-depth engagement with each participant's experiences, positioning, and voice (here complemented by the in-depth nature of the three-interview format). This process encompasses several distinct steps. First, all data are coded through an approach of "horizonalization" in which each section is considered with equal importance. Then, the researcher reduces data by reflecting upon the participants' lived experience and the phenomena in focus and identifies key excerpts and quotes. Next, the researcher compiles textural descriptions for each participant, followed by structural descriptions to observe themes across participants. Finally, the researcher synthesizes these textural and structural themes. For this research, two researchers reviewed the interview transcripts for key segments and themes in order to enhance trustworthiness of the findings.

FINDINGS

Survey Results

The survey responses provide a broad overview of residents' attitudes toward types of tourism in Mostar as well as perceptions of social outcomes specific to the Red Bull event, setting a stage of general understanding for the interviews to explore themes in greater depth. The survey's tourism-focused questions helped establish a baseline for understanding how residents perceive hosting visitors, broadly, and provided a comparison between sport event tourism and other types of tourism development. The tourism items (Table 2) revealed overall favorable impressions of tourism in Mostar, including support for tourism pertaining to large sports events (M = 6.11; SD = 1.31; 1-7 Likert-type scale). Tourism pertaining to the city's past 30 year's history was least favored overall (M = 5.33; SD = 1.88).

Table 3 presents responses to the questions pertaining to community impacts of the sport event. Overall, respondents perceived the event positively, with mean scores between 6 and 7 ("strongly agree" and "very strongly agree"). The highest-scored item was "the event enhances community pride," with a mean score of 6.45. Respondents also expressed strong agreement for the event's ability to enhance the sense of being a part of a community, provide an incentive for the preservation of local culture, and reinforce community spirit.

Table 2. Support for specific types of tourism development and promotion in Mostar and the surrounding region

Type of tourism	n	Mdn	M	SD
Tourism in Mostar (*general*)	406	7	6.14	1.25
Regional food, art, and music	396	7	6.26	1.12
Outdoor recreation [such as hiking, biking, rafting, fishing and swimming]	408	7	6.17	1.24
Large sport events [such as races, marathons, competitions, soccer matches, etc.]	405	7	6.11	1.31
Ottoman history and heritage	402	6	5.84	1.43
Yugoslavian history and heritage	404	6	5.65	1.57
History of the past 30 years [including the recent war]	406	6	5.33	1.88

Note. The Likert-type response scale (1 to 7) was presented with the following guidelines: 1 = extremely unsupportive, 2 = very unsupportive, 3 = somewhat unsupportive, 4 = neither supportive nor unsupportive, 5 = somewhat supportive, 6 = very supportive, 7 = extremely supportive. Items appear as they did on the survey instrument (pre-translation). Survey instrument asked: "On a scale of 1 to 7, please indicate how supportive you are of tourism development in Mostar and its surrounding region focused on:…"

Table 3. Resident perceptions of the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series event, by mean score

Statement	n	M	SD
The event enhances community pride	395	6.45	1.24
The event enhances the sense of being a part of a community	394	6.37	1.25
The event provides the incentive for the preservation of local culture	395	6.34	1.26
The event reinforces community spirit	395	6.33	1.34

Note. The Likert-type response scale (1 to 7) was presented with the following guidelines: 1 = very strongly disagree, 2 = strongly disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = strongly agree, 7 = very strongly agree. Statements appears as they did on the survey instrument (pre-translation). Survey instrument asked (pre-translation): "On a scale of 1 to 7, please indicate how much you agree with the following statement about the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series event in Mostar."

Interview Findings

Overview

The 14 participants had varying levels of engagement with the event, but all had at least seen clips on TV or the internet and were familiar with the event (Table 1). Although geographical delineations within the interview sample seemed to suggest some differences between the city's subpopulations in terms of engagement with the event, perceptions of the event were overall positive across all participants. The researchers identified four dominant themes pertaining to community event impacts: positive influences upon the city's recovering image and identity, communal appeal, event production and organizational strengths, and connections to local heritage and culture. These themes collectively imply positive social impacts in terms of social cohesion and collective pride.

City Image and Identity

External Perceptions. Mostar's war-blighted reputation created the contextual backdrop for understanding the impacts of tourism and events. Aldin, who works as a guide for international students, described how Bosnia and Herzegovina is commonly perceived:

The general image of us in the world is awful. That's my opinion…Everyone who sees Bosnia on the news, probably the first images are, like, war or grenades, smoke, destroyed buildings, and things like that. But the true image is completely the opposite.

Mirjana, a student, was of the opinion that tourists have been "very much drawn to the situation or the stigma around the city," specifically mentioning "the history, the poor people, the problems" and "the post-war situation and how everything looks." Echoing Aldin, Eva, a saleswoman from West Mostar, expressed hopes that tourists would leave Mostar with a "vision of some kind of modern version of this country," overriding preconceived notions.

Tourism and Internal Attitudes. In the interviews, it became clear that the topic of tourism was inseparable from the topic of community development in Mostar. In addition to the ways tourism can help extinguish external stigmas, participants frequently expressed how it impacted residents' own attitudes. For Tarik, who worked in hospitality, seeing tourists in Mostar equaled a feeling of progress: "it makes you feel like you are there, you are on the map, and you are important." Dragica, an accountant in her thirties, was hopeful that "if tourists come, we can forget all those bad things from the past." In Aldin's mind, tourism and

international events helped to bring an internal change of attitudes to Mostar:

Maybe we would be more aggressive, more mentally unsatisfied, or maybe we would be more 'in the box' if we were here only with ourselves. But being visited by a lot of people from different countries, it has to open your views, right? That's a good way of mind-changing, in a good way, right?

Perceptions of Mostar's Old Bridge provided indication of this attitudinal change. Mirjana explained that many Mostar residents "actually think of the Old Bridge as the divider and not the thing that connects two sides." Aldin, who had a mixed-ethnicity vantage point, believed a wider range of residents had more recently been expressing pride in the Old Bridge and it's neighborhood:

After the war, Mostar was split between Muslims and Croatians… Somehow Croatians all the time rejected to accept this part of the town as their own. Nowadays, it's quite different...Someone who's Croatian, speaking about Mostar, nowadays he will mention the Old Town. He will say, 'this is the Old Town, Old Bridge, from my city.' And he will speak about it proudly.

This sentiment was reflected in Dragica's comments: from her Croat perspective the Old Bridge was "only one way of representing Mostar," yet it was "definitely the main thing that represents Mostar as a city, so the tourists first need to go there."

Sport Event Impacts Upon Place Perceptions. The interview series did not begin with the topic of the Red Bull event, so the topic was able to emerge organically in the conversations before being prompted. Participants described the event using words like "amazing" (Aldin), and often brought it up as the key example of an event that had helped to transform the city's image. In an opinion echoed by others, Lana stated that "Red Bull has brought to this city so much publicity," and she "like[d] seeing our city being presented in the world." For many participants, the event provided a clear source of pride arising from Mostar's backdrop of hardship and stigma. Alma, a mother in her thirties, explained that the event's international publicity made her feel like "all of the world, in that weekend, knows about Mostar and about Bosnia." Tarik saw the other tour stops as being "elite places," stating, "I think we are privileged to be on this world tour." For Amin, a local athlete, observing so many visitors during the event provided him with a sense of feeling "fulfilled." Vedad had a similar response: "afterwards, I felt proud of my city, that my – I mean our – bridge was elected as one of the jumping

spots for Red Bull Cliff Diving." Ivana, too, said that she felt "proud," after seeing Red Bull's high-quality video clips online.

Communal Appeal of Sport Event

Overall, participants felt very positively toward the event, noting that it brought an upbeat, lively energy to the city. To Esma, a student, the event was "a 100% positive thing" for Mostar. Ivana, a tour guide, believed that the event "shows the best of Mostar." The two potential deterrents to event attendance that participants mentioned were environmental factors: the summer heat (Karlo, Lucija, Mirjana, Tarik) and crowding (Karlo, Lucija, Mirjana, Tarik, Ivana, Vedad). However, the crowding had some positive implications, as Ivana explained why she thought the event was a positive way to experience Mostar: "It's all people. Talking and crowded and happy and everything is full." Lana similarly stated: "we see the city transform into a cosmopolitan sort of place. It's dangerous, and [there's the] music fest throughout the old city. So of course, everyone likes these effects of it." For Dragica, the event inspired broad curiosity amongst residents: "People want to see what is happening."

The common attitude that the event was available to everyone was articulated by Eva, who suggested that it provided a more inclusive opportunity to bring people together at the Old Bridge:

I think [the event] is great because it's a combination of history, of the art of the bridge, of the action that comes from jumping, of an international event, and because it represents the West and the East of Mostar. A lot of people come together that usually don't like each other [laughs] because of the politics. So, it's great that it has something to unite them…Usually the Old Bridge represents the East side, but maybe because of the event it's not so easily noticeable. I think that's a really positive thing.

Several participants noted that the weekend-long event's varied attractions helped to garner interest from a broader range of residents. Teasingly, Dragica said of herself and her sister: "she will go to the party and I will go to the jumping." For Tarik, the event weekend offered people variety as well as a sense of escapism:

There is so much going on. Wherever you turn, there is a concert here, there is a concert there, there's a street performance there…There is always something that takes your mind away.

However, Tarik mentioned that for him, the competition

was "too much adrenaline" ("it's Red Bull, you know how it is," he explained) given his adrenaline-laden wartime childhood in Mostar – providing a reminder of how the city's dark history can arise in seemingly benign contexts.

Perceptions of Sport Event Production

Participants generally found the event production (operations and logistics, promotion, and attendee experience) to be both impressive and inspiring. Mirjana reflected upon the city's transformation during the event:

It almost looks like it's not Mostar, like it's not our city, like it's somewhere else, somewhere bigger, because it's very professional and all the foreign people are there, and everybody is very, I don't know, organized, and everything looks good on TV.

To Aldin, the event production was "a perfect example for our authorities of how to make something in a proper way." He hoped that this event could inspire and guide future community productions, but was unsure whether this would be possible.

Several participants, including Tarik, expressed perceptions of mutual respect between the city and the event: "Mostar likes Red Bull and I believe that Red Bull likes Mostar, so I believe that we have good relationship with each other." He elaborated further:

I don't think that there are any negative aspects because they're actually in compliance with everything. They don't pollute. They don't do any harm…They make the city great for a few days, greater…because there are a lot of stands, there are a lot of activities. There are a lot of opportunities. They hire local people for doing certain jobs and they help the community in this way.

Attuned to the athletes' experience, Amin observed that "the residents here and the tourists here have given [the divers] so much love… and [the athletes] were in love with the city, in love with the locals, and the tourists too." Lana and Tarik both noted that one of the athletes had personally cleaned up the event's beach area from litter, which had caught local attention.

Some participants noted room for improvement for the event's production. Karlo, who studied tourism at the university, provided a more critical perspective of the event:

It's a great opportunity, but it kind of feels poorly organized, like they didn't use the area around the bridge as well as they could have… It's a good starting point, but I

think they could turn it into a great festival. Such as more parties, playing games, stuff like that.

Similarly, Vedad, another student with interest in regional planning, thought that the event organizers could do more to encourage visitors to explore different parts of Mostar, as it currently "brings people just to one place." These comments illustrate some ways the event might be leveraged to make even greater community impacts.

The interviews commonly addressed the importance of having a well-known, outside (i.e., external to the Bosnian or former Yugoslavian region) event organizing body in creating both a more esteemed and a more inclusive event. Red Bull's positioning helped to establish trust within the community and within visitors, because, as Alma stated, "Red Bull knows all of the world; everybody knows Red Bull." In a city known for societal and political divisions, a foreign organizing body was perceived as more neutral. According to Eva, "people around here can be kind of, um, stubborn and principled and stuff like that. And someone who comes from the outside doesn't have the same view of things." Aldin, too, saw this contrast clearly: "[Red Bull] did more than our authorities did in the last 20 years. They did in one event," he stated, expressing frustration that local authorities didn't seem able to cooperative sufficiently to achieve something like this themselves.

Connections to Local Heritage and Culture

Widely, interview participants appreciated how the event was able to reflect and highlight unique aspects of their city and culture, both past and present. In addition to the historic setting, the coinciding music festival featured regional acts, and the live competition's announcers spoke mainly in the local language. To Katarina, a teacher from Western Mostar, the Red Bull event provided attendees with a taste of "everything" Mostar: "You see Stari Most, you see the people in Mostar, you can eat cevapi, and have fun." She explained that the event's diving focus made her feel proud because most cities "have basketball, soccer…But we have jumping, and we are different, I think," she said, laughing. Esma reflected upon televised interviews she had seen, in which athletes spoke about how the bridge venue presented a particularly meaningful setting: "it's much more for them, even for them…It presents for them a story of a monument." For visitors, residents, and event participants alike, local history and heritage seemed to play an important role in the experience of the event.

Several participants noted that the event helped to build upon local tradition and carry it into the future, providing an even greater feeling of pride for locals. Amin expressed that

he felt "proud" because Red Bull "chose us, they chose the city, and especially the bridge, and [they] add on to the history that we already have." He described the relationship between the Red Bull event and Mostar as a "win-win situation." Vedad expressed similar feelings:

I think [the event] emphasizes the tradition of diving into the Neretva River from the bridge. Diving here is all about diving from heights. It is an interesting combination, from the tradition that we have here in Mostar and then combining it with the cliff diving of Red Bull. I think that's cool about it.

For Aldin, a key aspect of the event's success was that it retained local character: "They basically adapted Red Bull to Mostar, not vice versa," he posited.

Building Upon Local Tradition. Several participants expressed appreciation for how this event built upon the local bridge diving tradition and turned it into something even more exciting and impressive. Alma expressed that her initial thoughts were, "Finally! This thing is getting on some high level!" She further explained that "because it is Red Bull, they are athletes, they are not just 'jumpers,' they are much more than that. Everything is a show." In Vedad's opinion, "Everything is better than it used to be from the traditional jumping on the bridge because Red Bull invested in the cliff diving." Lana appreciated how the Red Bull event brought more stylistic and geographic diversity: "The Red Bull event is much more fun because of the things [maneuvers] they do. Plus, the whole crew is international. Over here [for traditional jumping], most of the people are local, or from former Yugoslavia…plus they do only two sorts of jumps." Participants provided indication that the Red Bull event had begun to become interwoven with the city's own heritage: "it's becoming a little bit of a tradition," Esma mused.

Local Context of Sports. The broader social context of sports in Mostar arose in a few of the interviews (Mirjana, Lucija, Aldin). Mirjana explained that the city currently has two football teams, each with very active fan clubs—one based in East Mostar and the other in West Mostar. The teams' respective supporters have been known to get in fights, especially on game days. In Mirjana's perspective, "in America, [sports] all seem very fun and positive, and the sports make everybody excited. But here, it's just scary." Aldin reflected that this situation had improved in recent years, but affiliation with the city's sports teams remained one of the more common and obvious ways for residents to assert their ethnic/religious identities.

In contrast, the Red Bull event provided Mostarians with a

competitive sport context based around awe, excitement, and respect. Dragica said she found the sport "fascinating" because "I admire those people who jump, who have courage, because I couldn't!" For Lana, this equated to a unique spectator experience: "what they're doing up there it's so incredible … like you just live it. You look at them, the energy." Karlo felt that the Red Bull event "inspires people." However, he felt that there might be a missed opportunity in terms of local youth engagement: "I think that should be a bigger focus, since younger generations are the future, and Bosnia and Herzegovina has a lot of potential in that department, especially for extreme sports." To him, the "sports scene" in Bosnia and Herzegovina was currently underdeveloped. "If this could get more people to get active," he explained, "it'd be great both for Bosnia and Herzegovina and in general for sport." Karlo recalled that his little brother had seen the competition and said "I want to do that!" adding that "When I was a child, I wanted to do all sorts of stuff like that, but I wasn't anywhere you could actually do it," as sports facilities and programs had been lacking for him in West Mostar.

DISCUSSION

The interviews provided additional scientific evidence, aligned with the survey findings, of the event's positive role in generating positive social impacts. Schulenkorf (2012) describes sport-for-development projects as being particularly valuable in divided societies, where they may contribute to intergroup togetherness, social cohesion, and community empowerment. This research illuminated two main themes connected to these and other community social impacts. First, the event is uniquely positioned to create appealing and inclusive communal spaces within the city, facilitating social cohesion and opening opportunities for peaceful coexistence. Second, through showcasing the city's assets, exhibiting positive urban transformation, and modeling care and respect for the community, the sport event helps to generate a more collective form of pride amongst residents. These components create senses of progress and possibility for a city overcoming conflict.

Forging Spaces for Social Cohesion

As with the survey findings, the interviews offered indications of the event's positive abilities to foster community spirit, community pride, and a feeling of being a part of a community. In the interviews, participants articulated how the Red Bull event provided an exemplary exhibition of urban transformation through its ability to welcome all people. The presence of visitors and the event's international emphasis played key roles in fostering this new, inclusive sense of togetherness in an otherwise

familiar (and sometimes perceived as socially exclusive) East Mostar setting. This suggests that the event was able to construct a meaningful sense of liminality (cf, Chalip, 2006), facilitating social inclusivity within usually contested spaces.

Communal Appeal of Sport Event

Since the competition is a mostly free-of-charge event featuring male and female athletes and supporters from around the world, it is relatively well positioned to model ideals of inclusivity, distinctive from other sport events such as football matches, which have been noted to aggravate divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Hough, 2008) as well as in a variety of other international contexts (Svensson & Woods, 2017). It is important to note that none of the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series Mostar 2019 competitors were from Bosnia and Herzegovina or neighboring countries, so this study did not reveal fan-based issues pertaining to nationalism or other more divisive manifestations of pride, which could arise in other scenarios

Nevertheless, an apparent lower level of engagement from Western residents (as evident in interviewees' respective attendance) and stated frustrations about event attendees not experiencing more of the city illuminate an opportunity for the event to reach a broader population. These findings correspond with Ntloko and Swart (2008), identifying a greater opportunity for Red Bull events to engage residents, potentially reducing negative community impacts while also allowing a broadened base of residents to enjoy the event's entertainment and emotional benefits (including community pride). In Mostar, supplementary offerings like the music festival appeared to diversify engagement and build excitement. This further supports advocacy from Chalip (2006) and Daigo and Fili (2020) for using ancillary activities and social/interactive opportunities to build conviviality and sense of community, leveraging sport events toward greater social impact. Chalip suggests combining arts with sports, which seems well-suited for Mostar, especially given how survey respondents showed strongest support for tourism based upon regional food, art, and music.

The festival-like, weekend-long format of the event allowed for greater anticipation amongst locals for the auxiliary events (music, after-parties, etc.) while also expanding the event's potential to increase community economic benefits. This contrasts with the Azores-based Red Bull Cliff Diving event, where research revealed lower satisfaction scores amongst attendees age 35 and under, and noted that its one-day-only schedule limited broader economic benefits

(Avelar et al., 2020). Annual repetition is another notable factor, as it may build destination loyalty and stronger senses of place attachment among visitors (Kaplanidou et al., 2012) and build awareness and support amongst residents (Bull & Lovell, 2007). Scholtz et al. (2019) suggest that residents' perceptions of positive social impacts from recurrent sport events may decline over time, yet residents in Mostar seemed to maintain strongly positive opinions after five years of hosting.

Perceptions of Sport Event Production

Against a local backdrop of ethnic divisions, the Red Bull organization was widely viewed as an unbiased outside party advantageously positioned to appeal to a wide range of residents. As was evident in the Sarajevo-based research from Maslic (2019), this research suggests that participants' sense of trust in the sport organization is an important precondition of whether offerings can help to foster outcomes of social cohesion and peace. Other research from Bosnia and Herzegovina suggests that a balance of local and international control and expertise can be integral to the success of sport programs in peacebuilding efforts, as the local organization can keep local people motivated and engaged, and the international organization can help maintain ethnic balance of participants and perceptions of management neutrality (Gasser & Levinson, 2004). Although the Red Bull event relies largely upon international organizing, it maintains local connections through the sport, as well as the chosen venues and entertainment.

Importantly, organizational "neutrality" does not have to equate to apathy. Event organizers with interests in charitable engagements or assessing and ameliorating their own operational impacts through corporate social responsibility efforts should carefully consider the potential place-based social impacts of hosting an event in a particular setting. Although social impacts of events can be far more challenging to measure than economic benefits (Fredline et al., 2003), strategies such as conducting a community profile can help organizers (or other interested parties, such as city officials) identify place-specific event goals, beyond just financial outcomes (Kaplanidou, 2020). Partnerships between practitioners and researchers/academia can help articulate goals, build capacity, and engage different sectors and disciplines (Whitley et al., 2019).

Prior research suggests that youth engagement strategies, specifically, can have powerfully broad-reaching social impacts. In the case of post-conflict Sri Lanka, Schulenkorf and Edwards (2010) suggest that engaging youth as catalysts of peace and creating event-related social opportunities may help maximize opportunities for sport events to help foster peace amongst a divided local population. In Mostar, youth interventions and engagements (not limited to sport) have been seen as key avenues to either build peace or reinforce existing divisions (Laketa, 2019; Palmberger, 2019). In this research, youth engagement arose as a potential area of improvement for the Red Bull event. The Red Bull sponsors have already shown some interest in helping to foster local youth athletic involvement, such as by highlighting up-and-coming local athletes in past online press materials. Greater youth engagement could occur through additional offerings such as games for attendees, athlete meet-and-greets, and athletic training opportunities for local youth. This might hopefully inspire future engagement in sport. Research has indicated that one-off event attendance can be broadly influential in the intent to participate in sports (Ramchandani & Coleman, 2012); however, further tactics such as facility development may be needed for participation follow-through (Taks, et al., 2014). Sportsmanship can be a key component of how sport can facilitate social impacts (Maslic, 2019), and in this research several interviewees noted the positive words and behaviors of the athletes, suggesting strong potential for role modeling.

Peacebuilding Through Collective Pride
In a city well known for its residents' shared legacies of trauma, destruction, and divisions, the Red Bull event served as a reminder to residents of their shared community assets. The findings provide further support for the potentialities of sport events to help achieve community social benefits in transitional, recovering destinations, aligning with findings of other research pertaining to the former Yugoslavia region (e.g., Perić, 2018; Pranić et al., 2012). This research illustrates how a sport event can offer a re-envisioning of what a city's image and identity can be, while also celebrating local culture and traditions.

City Image and Identity

Building upon the survey's indications of strong resident support for tourism, the interviews suggested that Mostar residents commonly perceive tourism as a primary driver toward improved international reputation, re-envisioned internal associations with local places, and a more prosperous and peaceful future. The Red Bull event was able to build upon these benefits of tourism by adding additional layers of excitement and enjoyment for locals, emphasizing Chalip's (2006) notion that sport events can be positioned to create greater social impacts if they are not just about the sport competition itself, but also about making opportunities for festivity, socialization, and fun.

Participants appreciated how the event was able to use Mostar's existing environment, while also noting that the city felt completely transformed during the event—a recognition that seems reminiscent of Chalip's "sense that something important is happening" (2006, p. 110). Tourism research suggests that events designed to be more reflective of a city's character may lead to greater long-term tourism benefits by encouraging positive attitudes toward the city and more word-of-mouth referrals (Zhang et al., 2020). Similarly, events that are perceived to promote the host city/region and work to enhance community pride will likely be the most successful in the long term (Deery and Jago, 2010).

Mostar's inclusion in the World Series tour helped to facilitate place-based pride amongst residents from angles of self-evaluation as well as group association. Interview participants were simultaneously cognizant that it was an honor to be included in the tour and aware that Mostar was unique and special amongst the destinations. Prior research links sport events to enhanced feelings of community pride, particularly when service quality and social atmospheres are perceived as strong (Ribeiro et al, 2018) or when the occasion is promoted as a "hallmark" event (Waitt, 2001). Hosting sport events has been found to contribute to national pride in young people, particularly among males who participate in sport (Leng et al., 2012). Building a local social identity can be a key element of an event's ability to influence community pride (Magno & Dossena, 2020). In this research, participants' feelings of pride for their city were reinforced as they observed the event's high production value, television broadcasting, visitor enjoyment, celebration of local sport and culture, and deferential behaviors from the athletes.

Connections to Local Heritage and Culture

In Mostar, a critical aspect of the event's ability to generate community pride appeared to be its connection to local attributes. Several interviewees brought up how the event was able to build upon – and for some, improve—the city's longstanding tradition of bridge diving, bringing new enthusiasm to the sport. Svensson and Woods (2017, p. 43) express interest in whether "indigenous" sports may be better positioned to overcome the "hegemonic ideals and patriarchal associations often found in more traditional, organized sports," which is a relevant consideration given Mostar's notoriously divisive football culture. Despite how bridge diving in Mostar is mostly associated with one ethnic population, the sport's deeply-rooted connection to the city seemed to generate a broad sense of pride across residents. Although the survey and interviews revealed the city's history to be a controversial topic for tourism, the Red Bull

event seemed to offer widely-accepted means to showcase the historic, symbolic bridge site. The event provided a strong example of how "old" can meet "new," and how a city's historical aspects—even in places with dark pasts—can enhance and make way for opportunities that are distinctly modern. Adaptive community use of heritage buildings is encouraged as means of community regeneration (Bullen & Love, 2020), and this research provides evidence of how sport events, too, can embrace this notion. New, positive, and more inclusive associations can be imbued into a site that has traditionally been a source of varied emotions.

CONCLUSION

This research provides evidence that hosting an international sport event can be an effective tool for social impact in a divided community, creating spaces and opportunities for social cohesion and collective pride. In examining the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series in Mostar, the research suggests that these elements lay valuable groundwork for progress and peacefulness in a city seeking a new era. Survey and interview results converged and indicated that residents perceive this sport event as a largely positive force generating numerous community benefits, building upon many of the benefits observed from tourism, more broadly. Perceived to be a key driver of social and economic progress in the city and a celebration of some of the city's best aspects, the Red Bull event was widely noted to be a fun and memorable hallmark attraction for residents and visitors alike. The sport event provided residents with a strong example of how events can transform a city's feel and create welcoming and inclusive spaces, while also offering sport-based benefits such as athletic inspiration and role-modeling of sportsmanship.

The Red Bull event organizers did not explicitly state a social impact mission in Mostar, yet findings reflect a multifaceted array of community impacts resulting from the event. Although intentionality does not appear to be a prerequisite for community social impacts, there is sufficient evidence in this research that positive outcomes could be heightened or better leveraged with added intentionality. Ancillary event offerings and youth engagement could be expanded, and more neighborhoods could be engaged in event hosting and programming. These elements may require greater involvement of local knowledge and local stakeholders.

This research begins to identify some of the key elements of sport events that can contribute to positive social impacts. In settings with social divisions, the perceived neutrality of the event organizer (here, a well-known international

organization external to the region) may be instrumental in creative more welcoming and inclusive spaces and helping the community overcome local social and political barriers that might normally hinder development. By connecting with local traditions and places of significance, a sport event can serve a greater role in engendering senses of collective pride amongst residents. Promotional efforts and media broadcasting may further heighten feelings of pride and help blighted or stigmatized places find more positive reputations and identities. Complementary ancillary events may broaden the appeal of the sport event and open greater opportunities for senses of festivity and enjoyment.

Overall, these findings suggest that local perceptions of event impacts are highly connected to historical and social contexts. This illuminates the value of sport event planning and management processes that seek to understand, engage, and serve the host community.

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