

Women, Sport and Physical Activity

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN CHILDREN'S SPORT

Gretchen Kerr



Gender-Based Violence in Children's Sport

This book addresses the major forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in children's sport, including sexual, physical, and psychological violence and neglect. It reviews the historical, sociocultural, and political influences on violence towards children, and sets out future agendas for research and practice to eliminate GBV in sport.

The book argues that for GBV to occur and be sustained over time, it must be facilitated by a system that enables this violence, protects the perpetrator, disables bystanders, silences the victims, and/or fails to provide a structure by which to address victims' or bystanders' concerns. Drawing on empirical research from across a range of disciplines, including sport sociology, sport psychology, developmental psychology, and coaching, and examining real life case studies of GBV in sport at all levels, the book makes a powerful case for radical change in our current systems of sport governance, safeguarding, and athlete welfare.

This is important reading for any student, researcher, policy-maker, coach, welfare officer or counsellor with an interest in sport, gender studies, safeguarding, criminology, or sociology.

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Women, Sport and Physical Activity

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Part I

Introduction to Childhood and Child Athletes



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Introduction

Sports hold great meaning in my life, personally and professionally. They played an important part of my childhood, family life, education, social relations, and personal growth. They still do today.

As a child, most of my sport experiences were wonderful. With two parents who loved sports—my mother, an Olympian in 50-metre hurdles, and my father, an exceptional lacrosse and ice hockey player—my three siblings and I were introduced to a variety of sports as children. My mother was a strong believer in the value of gymnastics as a foundation for healthy child development and the best possible preparation for all other sports, so all of us were enrolled in gymnastics. I fell in love with the sport and was fortunate to be good at it, so this became my primary pursuit. My first coach, Kathy Mullen, loved working with children as much or more than she loved gymnastics, and as a result, I have fond memories of feeling valued and supported. For most of my competitive career, I had very supportive coaches who helped me develop as an athlete, encouraging me to move outside of my comfort zone to improve, doing so in a pedagogically sound and psychologically safe way that supported my sense of self.

So, how did I, after these early life, growth-enhancing, experiences in sport, come to study gender-based violence in sport? It was not planned or intentional. While a firm believer in the potential and promise of sport, I'm not naïve to the fact that sport causes harm to far too many young people. I still have strong memories of walking onto the competitive gymnastics floor with my teammates and all of us had swollen red eyes from crying. We were 11 years of age and had been yelled at and berated by our coach in the warm-up gym. I don't have any memory of why our coach treated us so badly—just that he did. But that and other similar harmful experiences wasn't what started me on the path to studying gender-based violence in sport. Instead, it was an experience with what I thought was a "dream job" that set me on an unexpected journey and would set a trajectory for a research programme and advocacy related to gender-based violence in sport.

Following an undergraduate degree in physical and health education and graduate degrees in sport psychology, I was elated to be offered a role as a sport psychology

consultant for a women's team preparing for an Olympic Games. Specifically, I was asked by the sport leaders at that time to help these athletes become more resilient and mentally tough in training, and to develop their perseverance as they were confronted with the inherent frustrations and pressures of high-performance sport. These young women cried frequently in our sessions. They spoke at length of the unhappiness they experienced in training due to verbal berating by coaches and pressures to look a certain way. Immediately, I began to question how, if at all, I could use the knowledge and skills acquired in my graduate education in sport psychology to help these athletes. Sure, I could teach them skills to help them sift through the negative things said to them by sport leaders to focus instead on the positives, or I could further develop their imagery and arousal control competencies to help manage their frustration and distress. But I kept questioning why I should be teaching these young women to better cope with situations they should not be confronted with in the first place? How could I teach them how to "overcome" their feelings of distress and low self-worth without addressing the causes of these feelings? And how did these bright, young, talented individuals become so broken when we claim that sport provides such wonderful growth opportunities?

Being young and naïve, I thought the solution to these dilemmas was to work with the adults in positions of trust and authority in the sport to influence the ways in which the training and nurturing of these talented athletes occurred. In hindsight, without a fulsome understanding or appreciation of the complexities of high-performance sport, the way I approached the power-brokers in this situation was unsophisticated and ineffective. This experience led me down the path of studying psychological abuse in sport and advocating for safer, healthier, and evidence-based methods of nurturing athletic talent.

I maintain that sport experiences present opportunities for personal growth and well-being, community-building, and the advancement of public health. However, these benefits are not guaranteed, nor are they possible without experiences that are physically and psychologically safe, including being free of all forms of violence. To realise the potential benefits of sport, sport needs to be designed and delivered in a rights-based and developmentally appropriate manner; this is the thread that weaves through the following chapters of this book.

Most of the chapters in this book will begin with a case study to bring the core concepts to life. Each case represents a true story although the names, sports, and other potentially identifying information have been changed to protect the identity of the athletes. For 30 years, I have had the privilege of serving as a volunteer athlete welfare officer for various sports. In this role, I have received disclosures and reporting of incidents of violence experienced by children in sport, either from the children themselves, their parents/guardians, or bystanders. Sometimes, this role involved giving advice or recommending resources; at other times, the disclosure led to a formal report, in which case, I would interview all involved parties and recommend potential avenues for resolution. This role enabled complainants

to bring their concerns forward to someone independent of the sport organisation. To date, there has not been an independent body in Canadian sport to receive and investigate complaints, leaving complainants having to report their concerns to the very organisation that either hires the actors of violence or is ill equipped to deal with complaints in a safe, transparent, and confidential manner without repercussions. The stories provided in this book came from these complainants and they have granted me permission to share their stories anonymously. I am in awe of the courage of these children and am indebted to them for letting me into their lives at such a vulnerable time. Their stories are included to show there are real children behind the research studies, statistics, and media cases of violence in children's sport.

Most of the studies referenced in this book define a child as under the age of 18 years based on the definition provided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, some of the research includes youth above the age of 18 years. Recent developmental theories include a life stage known as late adolescence or emerging adulthood that extends into the ages of early or mid-20s. This additional stage of lifespan development accounts for the older age at which many in Western countries experience employment, economic independence, and childbearing, than in earlier generations. As some of the authors cited later in the book refer to athletes above the age of 18 years as youth or emerging adults, their work has been included.

The book is divided into four sections. The first section of the book explores what it means to be a child, the role of sport in children's lives, and the making of elite child athletes. The second section addresses gender-based violence and its various forms in sport, including psychological, sexual, and physical violence and neglect. Within the discussion of each form, definitions and conceptual challenges will be presented, a review of prevalence rates and actors of the violence will be provided. In the third section, potential explanations for the occurrence and perpetration of gender-based violence in sport are proposed. Finally, in the last section, a vision for rights-based and developmentally appropriate sport will be offered. The book concludes with recommendations for realizing the vision that children have enriching sport experiences that enable them to discover their potentials, to respect themselves and others, to experience the joys of movement, and the feelings of transcendence when the body, mind, and spirit are harmonised through movement.

A Brief History of Childhood

What It Means to Be a Child

Introduction

What does it mean to be a child? What are the assumptions, philosophies, and processes underlying healthy child development? These are fundamental questions to understanding how sport should be designed and delivered to optimise development and to understand the developmental implications of sport experiences, including experiences of gender-based violence, on children. Childhood is a human creation—a social construction that varies across time and across cultures (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013). As such, perspectives of children's needs, development, and rights, and adults' responsibilities to children are ever-changing. In this chapter, a historical perspective of societal views of children, and the implications of these views on adults' roles with respect to children, and children's experiences of violence in sport will be addressed.

Before beginning, an important caveat to the research cited in this chapter must be addressed. Most child development literature has been written by Western scholars from what has come to be known as WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic) cultures (Henrich et al., 2010). As Henrich et al. (2010) write, the picture scientists from WEIRD cultures paint of children is biased and based on a minority of the population; as a result, any claims of universality about children and their development must be viewed with caution. Regrettably, this chapter also reflects a bias to literature from WEIRD scholars.

Contemporary Western views of children are the result of centuries of changes in cultural values, socioeconomic patterns, and advances in scientific knowledge. To understand the implications of sport and experiences of gender-based violence in sport for children, it is first necessary to understand how the historical views of childhood have influenced the treatment of children and their place in society today. Many writers of the history of childhood in Westernised cultures describe three distinct historical perspectives of children, beginning with a period of indifference to children, followed by the discovery of childhood, and then a preoccupation with childhood (Empey et al., 1999; Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013).

Historical Perspectives of Childhood

Indifference to Childhood

In Medieval Europe (6th–15th century), little or no recognition of childhood as a separate, distinct, and unique period of life existed (Berk, 2013). As such, once out of infancy, children were viewed as miniature adults and as property, a view called preformationism (Ariès, 1962), which still exists in parts of the world today. Without special rights or differential treatment, there was no mandatory education and children were engaged in labour in deplorable conditions, sometimes dying from their experiences (Radfar et al., 2018). Later in this period, the Puritan belief in original sin dominated, reflecting a belief that children were born with sin and the goal of child-rearing therefore was salvation and removal of sin (Moran & Vinovskis, 1985). Flowing from this view was an emphasis on the use of punishments, including harsh beatings to rid one of sin and tame the child. Today, in many countries around the world, these behaviours would be classified as child abuse.

Discovery of Childhood

The 17th-century enlightenment period was characterised by philosophies that attended to human dignity and respect. For example, John Locke, a leading British philosopher, argued for a *tabula rasa* or blank slate view of children (Berk, 2013). It follows that if children are viewed as blank slates, then the goal of child-rearing is to influence positive development. The influence of the environment on child development was heightened, allowing for more possibilities for various developmental trajectories. Gradually, during this period, childhood was increasingly recognised as a unique stage of development. Parents were viewed as playing key roles in molding development through praise and the use of rewards, careful instruction, and the modelling of behaviour. This period was also viewed as the child-saving era, as children were viewed as passive beings in need of protection (Platt, 1969).

In the 18th century, French philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau introduced a child-centred philosophy (Berk, 2013). In contrast to the *tabula rasa* perspective, child-centredness included a view of children as active agents in their own development. The role of adults, according to this view, was to be responsive to the child's individual needs at each unique stage of development. Consequences of this view included a focus on formal education, the introduction of laws to protect children from child labour, emphasis on the developmental benefits of loving and nurturing parents, and the introduction of the unique stage of development now known as adolescence.

A significant shift occurred in the mid to late 1800s when the role of the state in the protection of children was recognised. In contrast to previous generations

when the treatment of children was viewed as entirely the purview of the family, child protection advocates argued that children need to be protected by the state when their families failed to do so. As a result, children who were neglected or abused were housed in state supported institutions. In Westernised countries, this period was known as the house of refuge movement and represented the government's first attempt to intervene in cases of child maltreatment (Empey et al., 1999). It was not until 1871 that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was formed by members of the previously established Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Respect for the sanctity and privacy of the family regarding treatment of children is highlighted by the fact that animals that had experienced harm or were at risk of harm were state-protected before children (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013).

This period of history was also characterised by increasing recognition of the significance of early life experiences on subsequent health and development. In Sigmund Freud's 1896 paper entitled "Seduction Theory", he proposed what was, at the time, the novel idea that the sexual and physical abuse of children often under-pinned medical and psychological problems in childhood and later in life (Israëls & Schatzman, 1993). Although this paper was met with significant criticism at the time, it paved the way for the recognition that experiences in childhood form a foundation for later development. As Lombardo (2001) wrote, "Childhood is not the shortest age in our life but rather the longest because it stays with us until our death", highlighting the influences of childhood experiences on health, development, and well-being later in life.

Preoccupation with Childhood

It was not until the latter part of the 20th century that children were viewed as innately good, born with potentials to be nurtured and developed. Childhood and adolescence were recognised as distinct stages of life, separate from adulthood. It wasn't until the early 1900s that adolescence was viewed as a unique life stage, separate from childhood and adulthood. Stanley Hall was attributed with the identification of adolescence, emerging in response to changes in labour laws and universal education which extended the period before the responsibilities of adulthood were incurred (Lerner & Steinberg, 2009). The period of adolescence as a life stage was later divided into early (ages 11–14), middle (ages 15–17) and late (ages 18–21) adolescence to account for longer periods of education and the resulting delays in financial independence, marriage, and child-bearing. Along with these shifts came an increased emphasis on the role of significant adults in the child's development, a greater focus on education, high-quality early life experiences, and special legal protections for children and adolescents.

By the 1960s and 1970s, several societal changes influenced the ways in which children were treated and nurtured. The introduction of accessible birth control meant that parents could choose when and if they wanted a child, which according to Tofler and DiGeronimo (2000) led to a "children as gold" perspective.

Advancements in knowledge about child development and care meant that parents focused on providing children with a range of developmental opportunities such as engagement in sport, music, and art lessons, and summer camps intended to enrich the child's development and mold them into the best they could be. This led to new ways of defining what is best for the child and the "good parent" (Coakley (2001). Together, these changes led to parents enrolling their children in a variety of outside-of-school activities and devoting significant time, energy, and money to their children's activities including finding the "best" instructors and teachers (Coakley, 2001; Tofler & DiGeronimo, 2000). The 1970s were also characterised by the women's movement (Schulz, 2017). With more women entering the workforce, especially in professional positions such as teaching, nursing, and social work that involved working with children, they increasingly advocated for the rights of children. Additionally, with more women working outside of the home, children needed after-school care, and hence, engagement in adult-organised activities was popularised (Coakley & Donnelly, 2009).

Considerable movement towards child protection also characterised this period. Child abuse became recognised as a social problem in the 1960s with the work of Kempe and colleagues (1962) who coined the term "battered child syndrome". Many jurisdictions in Western countries introduced laws mandating that persons in select professional positions such as physicians and teachers report suspected cases of abuse, although the focus at this time was on sexual and physical abuse primarily (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013).

By 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was ratified and signed by all countries except for Somalia and the United States (David, 2005). As a strong indicator of the special status ascribed to children, the UNCRC also presented children and adolescents as active agents with rights rather than as passive beings and in need of protection (Volpe et al., 1997). The four basic principles of the UNCRC are children's rights to: nondiscrimination; life, survival, and development; the obligation to have their best interests as the primary consideration, and; to express views freely in matters that affect them (Peleg, 2018). Much has been written about ongoing human rights violations in children, including contexts in which children's rights have purportedly not permeated, such as sport.

Coupled with ongoing recognition of children's rights was a burgeoning body of research on child and adolescent development that provided information about physical, cognitive, and social development, their interactions, and the requisite conditions for optimal development in each of these domains. Enhanced knowledge about the biological, psychological, and social influences on child development informed approaches to interacting with children, including methods of parenting, teaching, and sport coaching.

With advancements in our understanding of child development, parenting and teaching methods shifted from autocratic styles, characterised by control and the use of punishments, to more democratic, child-centred approaches that focus on teaching and guiding children (Coloroso, 1994; Nelsen et al., 2013; Weininger,

2002). As seen later in this book, these trends have had little effect on sport coaching. There was also growing recognition of the importance of systems around the core parent-child unit to support the child and parent. One theory that captures the multilayered influences on child development is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development

Bronfenbrenner's theory views the individual as developing within a complex system of relationships and multiple levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The innermost level is the microsystem which consists of the activities and interactions in the person's immediate environment. For children, these relationships may include the parents, siblings, daycare staff, or teachers. In addition, the microsystem considers the child's personality, physical attributes, and capabilities. Bi-directional relationships exist between the characteristics of the child and the immediate relationships. The mesosystem encompasses connections between microsystems. For example, a child's performance in school is influenced by the relationship with the teacher and activities in the classroom as well as parental involvement in learning, and provision of adequate sleep and nutrition. The exosystem refers to social settings outside of the individual that influence the individual. For example, flexible work schedules, childcare centres, playgrounds, and maternity/paternity leaves influence the development of the child. The macrosystem consists of cultural values, laws, customs, and resources. In the same way that war influences child development, so does government supported day care and laws against the use of corporal punishment with children. Finally, the chronosystem accounts for the changes in these relationships over time.

In the same way that ecological systems theory can be used to advance our thinking about healthy child development, it can also be used to understand how and why gender-based violence occurs in sport. As will be seen later in this book, the occurrence and perpetuation of gender-based violence in sport is multifaceted and multilayered, with influences ranging from the important adults in the child's life, including those in the sport system, and the ways in which sport is organised, delivered, and funded for children, protections for children, and the prioritisation of children's rights.

Conclusion

Before addressing experiences of gender-based violence in children's sport, considerations of child development and what it means to be a child is needed. Childhood itself is a social construction that has changed over time and continues to vary across cultures. An historical perspective highlights the transition of Western views of children from miniature adults without rights to individuals with potentials to be nurtured and rights to be protected. Fundamental to today's view is the

multifaceted nature of influences on child development, from the role significant adults play in the child's life, to contextual influences such as laws, public policy, and societal values. Further, the importance of child development as a foundation for later health and development is well understood and widely accepted. It follows then that societal views and assumptions about children and their development will inevitably influence the design and delivery of sport for children, the nature and quality of children's experiences in sport, and the impact of these experiences on longer-term development.

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The Making of Elite Child Athletes

Even as young as 5 years of age, Filipa showed remarkable hand-eye coordination. They could catch small objects with either hand and use instruments such as a foam racquet and plastic stick to strike and propel balls with extraordinary accuracy. Filipa was a very active child—they couldn't sit still—and to deal with the high activity level, Filipa's parents enrolled them in all kinds of activities, including piano lessons, swimming, gymnastics, tennis, and soccer. Of all activities, Filipa loved tennis the most, and as they grew older, they wanted to spend more time playing tennis, gradually letting go of other activities. By the age of 13 years, Filipa was taking the tennis world by storm, winning matches against older, more experienced tennis players. It soon became clear that to advance further in the sport, Filipa would need to move from their local club to a tennis academy where players live, train, and go to school. The closest academy was a three-hour flight from Filipa's home. Filipa begged their parents to enable them to move to the academy. Filipa's parents were reluctant. They had two younger children, were worried about Filipa's education and the implications of Filipa not living at home. And, while they were comfortable financially, they did not have the economic means to cover the high costs of training and residence at the academy. At the same time, they could see how much Filipa loved tennis, how good they were at it, and found it difficult to resist their pleas to attend the academy. To no surprise, they wanted the best for their child but were left wondering which scenario represented Filipa's best interests—either they stayed home with the love and support of the family unit, friends, and local school, and gave up their dreams to excel in tennis or they followed Filipa's tennis dream and was distanced from their family, friends, and school. Their reluctance led to the academy offering Filipa a scholarship which would help the family financially. Eventually, Filipa's parents agreed but were left feeling very unsettled about their decision. As hoped, Filipa's tennis career blossomed as they continued to move up in international rankings, earning sponsorships along the way. However, struggles with a chronic shoulder injury eventually ended Filipa's career at the age of 22 years. Filipa moved back to the family home having attained a high school degree and a few university credits. Filipa's friends were all on the tennis circuit and not being on the circuit meant they were isolated from friends. The time devotion to the tennis career had prevented Filipa from developing or pursuing other interests. Taken together, Filipa experienced significant psychological challenges for a few years after tennis retirement. With the support of their family, and the help of professional psychological supports, Filipa developed a plan to return to university studies in the field of business for which they had an affinity.

Introduction

Sport for children began as a co-curricular activity aimed at enhancing children's holistic health and development—physically, psychologically, and socially—and for many, these objectives are achieved. At its best, organised sport for children provides important developmental and health benefits for children—physically, psychologically, and socially (Anderson-Butcher, 2019; David, 2005; Kjønnsniksen

et al., 2009). A substantial body of literature exists citing the benefits of sport for children, including the promotion of holistic health, and life skills such as collaboration and perseverance that contribute to a positive developmental trajectory (Holt et al., 2009; Jørgensen et al., 2020). Sport participation can provide opportunities for important interactions between children and adults beyond the family unit. Millions of parents in Westernised countries register their children in sport annually on the basis that sport engagement contributes to healthy development, however, these potential benefits of sport participation for children are neither automatic nor guaranteed.

As adult involvement in children's organised sport increased, training became more intensive, leagues became more competitive and exclusionary, with increasing emphasis on the performance outcomes of winning and losing (David, 2005). For many of today's elite child athletes, sport has become an intensive endeavour that requires such a full-time commitment that it precludes other possible developmental opportunities. Many young athletes find themselves in sport experiences where adults organise their activities, make decisions for them, often without the child's engagement, and where adults benefit and sometimes financially profit from the child's sport career (David, 2005; Donnelly, 1997; Kidd & Eberts, 1982). This chapter will address the various influences that have led to the birth of elite child athletes and the concerns about the conditions in which many elite child athletes find themselves today.

The Birth of the Elite Child Athlete

In much of the global north, during the mid-20th century, changes in the structure of families and the workforce contributed to the growth of organised sport including organised, adult-directed sport for children (Tofler & DiGeronimo, 2000). After World War II, a healthy economy meant that families could devote more resources to leisure and recreation. As more women entered the workforce, there was a need for child-care outside of school hours which contributed to engagement of children in co-curricular activities outside of school hours (Coakley & Donnelly, 2009). At the same time, advancements in knowledge about child development contributed to the growth of organised sport for children. Specifically, there was growing recognition of the role of early life experiences for later development, and the importance of children experiencing a range of opportunities to ensure the most positive developmental trajectories. Consistent with this view, "good parents" were those who enrolled their children in a range of outside-of-school activities, including sport, and devoted time, energy, and money to providing their children with the best coaches and instructors (Coakley, 2001). The "good parent" was one who sacrifices time, money, their own needs and interests to give their children the best quality experiences and opportunities available. In Western countries, the wider fitness movement of the 1970s also contributed to an increased emphasis on the importance of being physically active for health, happiness, and productivity,

and in response, children and youth sport and recreation opportunities proliferated (Eisenman & Barnett, 1979).

Sounding the Alarms of Elite Sport for Children

As adult-organised sport for children grew, so did the criticisms of these opportunities, and by the 1970s, researchers were sounding the alarms about the developmental costs of organised sport for children. Orlick and Botterill (1975) in their book, *Every Kid Can Win* emphasised that adults' focus on performance outcomes such as winning can be damaging to a child's sense of self and other developmental experiences. Similarly, Martens (1978) in *Joy and Sadness in Children's Sports* cites overly structured, adult run, and winning-focused sport as damaging to children's development and enjoyment of sport. As organised sport for children proliferated, early specialisation in one or two sports replaced the valuable practice of sampling across sports (Côté et al., 2009), which provides children with a variety of experiences to learn from and to test their skills and interests. To ensure children experience "success", early talent identification systems were developed along with specialised training programmes that extended across the year, thus restricting engagement in and experimentation with other sports or activities. Very structured lives resulted with exploratory, child-driven play being replaced with adult-run, structured training and competition (Coakley & Donnelly, 1992; Tofler & DiGeronimo, 2000).

Other expressed concerns about elite children's sport included not permitting children to be children, exposure to excessive psychological and physical stress, and restriction of experimentation with various experiences and social relationships (Galasso, 1988; Grupe, 1985). Similarly, Alley (1974) wrote, "[Sports] should be thought of as a two-edged sword, capable of cutting in opposite directions. The direction the sword cuts depends on those who swing it, not on the sword itself" (p. 104). In children's sport programmes, Alley (1974) claimed that adults are swinging the two-edged sword and thus have control over the nature and quality of the child's experience in disconcerting ways.

Numerous researchers and practitioners over the past 50 years have written about the developmental costs resulting from the loss of child-driven, exploratory, and unstructured play for children, including missed opportunities to learn about themselves, others, and the world. The shift to adult-run, organised sport with a focus on performance outcomes has led sport to be more exclusionary, geared to those who are more athletically gifted and financially capable (Clark, 2012; Kingsley & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2015). This shift has also led further and further away from adherence to athletes' rights (Kidd & Eberts, 1982). Despite efforts to reduce adult engagement in children's sports, such as the development of parental behavioural contracts (Dorsch et al., 2017), banning of parental involvement (Abrams, 2002; Barth et al., 2003), and promotion of cooperative games (Orlick, 1977), the concerns about organised sport for children remain. At its worst,

children's organised sport may be exploitive, unhealthy, developmentally harmful, and abusive (David, 2005).

The Recognition of Children's Rights

The problems of early specialisation and intensive training by children was recognised by the 1964 UNESCO *Declaration on Sport* (Maheu, 1972), which later developed into a global rights document, the *International Charter on Physical Education and Sport* (UNESCO, 1978) (now the *International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport*; UNESCO, 2015). In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was ratified by 196 states with the exception of the United States and Somalia (David, 2005). The four primary principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are: nondiscrimination; best interests of the child; right to life, survival, and development; and the right to express views freely in matters that affect them. The UNCRC gave children visibility and placed children and their best interests at the centre of decision-making. The interdependence and indivisibility of all human rights were emphasised which, when applied to sport, highlight the importance of considering the implications of sport participation on the child's education, relationships with family and friends, and engagement in other activities. Promotion and protection of athletes' human rights should increase the confidence of athletes and the public in the integrity of sport institutions, and yet, as many authors have written, sport is one of the domains not permeated by human rights (David, 1999, 2005; Donnelly, 1997; Tofler & DiGeronimo, 2000).

In the following section, the (mis)alignment of children's rights and children's organised sport will be explored.

Elite Sport as a Violation of Children's Rights

Ideally, human rights and children's sport should be interwoven and mutually supportive, however, evidence exists to indicate that this is not the case. According to David, in his seminal book *Human Rights in Youth Sport: A Critical Review of Children's Rights in Competitive Sport*, competitive sport in general, and children's sport in particular, is the only sector of society in which international child rights norms and standards are not embedded (2005).

Right to Participate

The demise of school-based sport opportunities has contributed to a shift to organised sport opportunities outside of school settings. Sport opportunities in schools enabled all children, regardless of socioeconomic status and athletic ability, to participate, thus serving as an equaliser of opportunity. In contrast, the financial costs of registration, equipment, competition or game fees, and travel for organised sport participation creates barriers to access and challenges the rights of

children to participate. Further, fewer opportunities to engage in sport remain for girls, racialised and Indigenous children, and trans and intersex children (Kulick et al., 2019; Liew et al., 2022; Strandbu et al., 2019). Another ongoing concern in sport is the differential access and treatment of children of varying abilities as children with disabilities face barriers ranging from physical access to sport environments and equipment, to a lack of trained leaders and discriminatory practices (DePauw & Gavron, 2005). With a focus on winning or performance outcomes, sport favours those children with greater athletic abilities who often experience more playing time, more opportunities, and more supports for their athletic development (Lorentzen, 2017). In summary, between the emphasis on performance outcomes and the financial costs of organised sport, organised sport for children has become an exclusionary activity, limiting access and the right to participate to those with financial means and athletic talent.

Right to Qualified Leadership

Children's right to qualified leadership is a contemporary concern of organised sport. In the Canadian system, coaches at the grassroots level tend to be former athletes or volunteer coaches—often the parents of the participating children. Even when these coaches understand the technical aspects of the sport, there is little assurance they have knowledge of child development and developmentally appropriate practices. Without knowledge of child development and pedagogically appropriate practices, methods and strategies are typically adopted from adult or professional levels of sport, creating conditions in which performance outcomes are prioritised over health and development. Despite the introduction of coach education programmes in Canada, which attempt to ensure a minimal standard of competence, problems of developmentally inappropriate coaching practices remain today. Given sports' reliance on volunteers for the provision of organised sport opportunities for children, especially at the lower levels of sport, organisations are reluctant to introduce higher standards of required education, professional development, monitoring, and evaluation of children's coaches (Donnelly & Harvey, 2011; Stewart, 2021). These influences point to the ongoing concerns about the quality of leadership of children's organised sport programmes.

Right to Safety and Security

Concerns about violations of children's *right to safety and security* when participating in sports have long existed and persist today. In the 1960s and 1970s, the problems of intensive training including overuse injuries, stress and burnout, and a singular identity, amongst others were raised (Galasso, 1988; Orlick & Botterill, 1975; Pearl & Cahill, 1993). In the 1980s and 1990s, the issue of sexual abuse in sport was highlighted (Brackenridge, 1997). As a clear violation of physical and psychological safety, sexual abuse cases between coaches and child athletes, primarily male coaches and girl or women athletes, led to public and scholarly

scrutiny of competitive sport. Stemming from this research was an increased focus on the ways in which power was used and misused by those in positions of authority and trust in sport, including coaches, administrators, officials, and sport science support staff. Although the emphasis of this body of work continues to be on sexual violence, increasingly, focus is being devoted to the far more prevalent form of violence in sport—that of psychological violence, which has become so embedded in the sport culture that it is not often seen as problematic (see, for example, Donnelly, 1993; Jacobs et al., 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2009; Willson et al., 2021). At the time of this writing, global concerns about toxic sport cultures in which athletes claim a lack of psychological safety are permeating public and academic discussions (Star Editorial Board, 2022; Thorpe et al., 2019).

Right to Express Views Freely in Matters That Affect Them

Children also have a right to express views freely in matters that affect them and yet substantial evidence exists highlighting the lack of voice and input athletes have into the decisions that affect them (Lang & Hartill, 2015). As MacGregor (2021, p. 79) writes, “Although athletes represent the very heart and focal point of every sporting competition, they often have very little power or decision-making ability in their sports and sport organizations”. Within the training environment, autocratic or controlling coaching styles have traditionally characterised sport contexts, leaving little room for two-way communications, consultations with athletes, or the inviting of athletes’ input and perspectives. The coach-athlete relationship has been likened to that of a slave-master (Crosset, 1986), highlighting the significant power held by the coach over the athlete, including power over decision-making, and allocation of resources such as the coach’s time and expertise.

In addition to coaching philosophies and approaches inhibiting the expression of athletes’ voices, parents have also been identified as important agents who, despite their desires to act in the best interests of the child, can also inhibit athletes’ input. For example, parents often make decisions for their children to participate in youth sport and at which level, and as such, a dynamic exists where parents, who are in more powerful positions, determine what is best for the less powerful athletes (Donnelly, 1993; Sartore-Baldwin et al., 2017). Several authors have written about parents of talented youth achieving their own dreams through their children, thus experiencing vicarious success through their children, a process referred to as “Achievement by Proxy Distortion” by Tofler and DiGeronimo (2000, p. 58). This process begins with initial sacrifices, such as the provision of additional coaching and sport science support. Sometimes, this initial sacrifice means uprooting the entire family to move to another city or country to access training or separating the family geographically to provide the best training for one child. Gradually, the young athlete loses the opportunity or ability to contribute to her experiences given the sacrifices and investments adults are making in her athletic development. With this gradual loss of voice, the young athlete

increasingly is objectified—treated as a product to be molded by influential others, leaving her vulnerable to potential rights violations, from financial exploitation to experiences of maltreatment (Tofler & DiGeronimo, 2000).

The intensive commitment made by child athletes, their parents, and coaches may make it difficult for the child to speak up about their unhappiness or about a desire to leave an activity they do not enjoy. Tofler and DiGeronimo (2000) refer to an implied debt children may feel towards their parents and coaches, knowing what they have invested and sacrificed for the child's sport career. This sense of debt may be exacerbated when the coach's employment depends upon the child's athletic career. The implications of this implied debt may be seen when child athletes train beyond their limits, stay silent about pain or injuries, feel an obligation to follow the adults' directions, and do not disclose or report mistreatment. As Tofler and DiGeronimo (2000) claimed, it's easy to see how this sense of obligation and implied debt may make children vulnerable to exploitation by adults in the sport system.

Right to Engage in Developmentally Appropriate Activities

According to the UNCRC, children have a right to “engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child” thus emphasising the call for child-sensitive and child-centred approaches that are developmentally appropriate (David, 2005, p. 40). Yet, questions and concerns continue to be raised about the extent to which elite sport is child-centred and developmentally appropriate. Is it developmentally appropriate for children at the age of 10 years to train for 20–30 hours per week? What developmental opportunities are sacrificed as a result of this commitment? And, is it child-centred to have children live away from their families to pursue their athletic careers?

Developmental psychologists highlight the critical nature of activities, tasks, and relationships being developmentally appropriate to enable children to learn about themselves, their interests and competencies, to learn about how to interact with others, and to learn more about the world in which they are situated. Such exposure and engagement are important for achieving important developmental assets such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, a sense of industry or work ethic, and abilities to cooperate and collaborate, as some examples (Berk, 2013). The loss of unstructured, exploratory play in favour of adult-directed, structured activities in sport creates conditions in which development of imagination and curiosity, initiative, and a sense of competence are inhibited (Korn-Bursztyn, 2012; Moyles, 2015).

Without attention to children's developmental needs as the foundation to the design and implementation of children's sport, it's easy to understand how professionalism has permeated children's sport. The running of sports with the same rules as those in adult sport, the emphasis on winning and associated rewards, the young ages in which specialisation and intensive training occurs, are examples of the infusion of professionalism in children's sport. At

its extreme, are sport schools, in which children move away from their homes to attend live-in schools that focus primarily on athlete development with school and other developmental opportunities placed at the margins. Donnelly (1997) has likened sport schools to factories in which children “work” long hours for the primary benefit—often economic benefit—of adults. The pursuit of commercial success through professionalism is clearly at odds with the developmental needs and rights of the child (Barth et al., 2003; Cumming & Ewing, 2002).

Donnelly (1997) and others (Center for Sport and Human Rights, 2022) have argued that when children’s participation in sport involves “economic exploitation and . . . performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development” for their own or someone else’s gain (economic, political, or reputational), child labour is said to occur. Particular concern arises when the livelihood of adults, such as coaches, administrators, agents, and sport science staff, depend on the performance of children.

Returning to the Case of Filipa

This case illustrates the making of an elite athlete, including early specialisation and the intensive and exclusive commitment to the sport at a young age. Despite the parents’ reservations about the implications of pursuing elite sport under the requisite conditions, their decisions are eventually guided by their child’s passion for the sport, believing they are operating in the best interest of their child. The narrow focus on sport at a young age precluded Filipa from engaging in other activities or with other individuals, thus making her transition out of sport more difficult. Filipa’s story raises questions about the extent to which her experiences were physically, psychologically, and socially safe, and whether they were developmentally appropriate.

Conclusion

Sport for children began as an opportunity to contribute to healthy physical, psychological, and social development. For many, sport realises these objectives but for others sport does not contribute to healthy development and may, at its worst, be harmful to development. As sport for children has become more adult-like and adult-controlled, concerns about harms to children, including experiences of violence and the violation of their rights, have been highlighted. These concerns are not new. For 50 years, alarms have been sounded regarding an over-emphasis on winning, early specialisation, the stifling of children’s voices and their autonomy, and a lack of child development-focused leadership. As David (2005) and others have proposed, until children’s rights are embedded into sport, these problems will continue.

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What Is Gender?

Debra Kriger and Amélie Keyser-Verreault

Introduction

To learn about gender-based violence, it is important to start with the question of what gender is. At its foundation, gender can be understood as an evolving, embodied, sociocultural construct that shapes how individuals move in and interact with the world. Famously theorised as a performance which defines and maintains itself (Butler, 1990), gender is our movements and behaviours through space and over time; it is how we exist in the world and how we relate to other humans, objects, and contexts. Gender is an ongoing assignment that does not just happen once: we are assigned a sex and gender at birth, and then expectations follow which continue to “assign” gender to us as we move through space and time. We supply constant reaffirmation of our respective genders through performance.

Gender Identity and Expression

Gender identity refers to an individual’s personal, sometimes private, sense of themselves, while gender expression refers to how an individual outwardly represents their gender. Gender can be expressed through as many ways as are conceivable, and most readily through such aspects of self-expression as dress, hairstyle, body decorations, make-up, behaviour, speech, movement, pronouns, and name. It’s important to note that the concept of gender identity is not universal and it may have little meaning for some who live their gender in “traditional cultural ways that may not match their birth-assigned sex, but with spiritual or cultural role at the forefront rather than identity” (Robinson, 2017 as cited by Bauer et al., 2017, p. 3).

Content note: This chapter provides an introductory overview of gender from two cis women authors. The chapter speaks to various systems of oppression and gendered experiences of harm and microaggressions to an audience seeking to gain familiarity.

Cisgender

Cisgender (“cis”) describes people whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth and transgender (“trans”) describes people whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth (Lindqvist et al., 2020), though some men and women with a history of transition do not identify as trans (Bauer et al., 2017). Since at present paradigms generally persist in assigning gender at birth along a binary system of man/woman, cisgender currently only refers to binary gender identities—with a diversity of gender expressions. Trans is an umbrella term for a wide range of gender identities—binary and non-binary—with many gender expressions. There are also gender identities and expressions that are Indigenous or specific to particular cultures (Bauer et al., 2017).

The structures which uphold cissexism also have profound impacts in sport. A sample of trans people reported being motivated to be physically active (Jones et al., 2017), but are less active as a population than their cis peers (Muchicko et al., 2014) as a direct result of unwelcoming sport spaces, policies, and structures designed for cis people. Within the heteronormative context of sport, the lack of inclusive policies mean trans people can face exclusion, discrimination, rejection, and harassment in mainstream sport spaces (Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2017; Teetzel & Weaving, 2017), and can experience sport spaces—such as the pool—as unsafe (Elling-Machartzki, 2017). Trans people reported higher participation in sport when they hid or concealed their gender identities (López-Cañada et al., 2020), with young trans adults who are medically transitioning reporting several barriers to physical activity and sport pre-, during, and post- gender affirming therapies (Jones et al., 2017). More particularly, Hargie et al. (2017) identified four interconnected themes important to trans inclusion in sport: the change/locker room, the impact of being alienated from sport in school, the fear of public space and associated constraints on sports participation, and the overall effects of being denied access to the benefits of sport (Hargie et al., 2017).

Binarism

In the context of gender, binarism is the erroneous philosophy that there exist only two discrete and mutually exclusive gender options, sometimes written as “man/women” or “masculine/feminine”. Binarism is intimately linked to racism, coloniality, and ongoing rigid colonial categorisations of people, reflective of the colonial need to fix and order identity in time and space. Non-binary gender identities and two-spirit identity can mean different things to different non-binary or two-spirit people. What is common among non-binary gender identities, however, is that they are not adequately represented by the binary options of “man” or “woman” and are often marginalised by dominant binary gender structures which impose mutually exclusive identification as one of those two options only. Moreover, the binary gender system juxtaposes its dichotomies of man/woman or masculine/feminine as complementary to each other or “opposites”, with harmful impacts on all genders

and important links to sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. The compulsory “complementarity” of binary gender puts limits on individuals’ identities, expressions, and relationships. The masculine and feminine do not need to be—and are not observed to be—mutually exclusive or complementary identities. They can exist together, they can exist subsequently, they can exist fluidly—and there exist many more gender identities beyond the masculine and/or feminine altogether. However, social interactions/expectations, spaces, and processes are often stubbornly predicated on presumptions of binary gender. Similarly, binary gender is deeply embedded in and mutually supportive of other systems of oppression such as ableism, heterosexism, and classism. The ways each of these systems are enacted, supported, and in which they manifest (for example, through policies, programs, spaces) are gendered, often with solid roots in the binary expectations of what it means to be a man or woman.

Sexism

Sexism is the system of power and oppression which produces a hierarchy between men and the masculine over women and the feminine. Sexism operates, as other systems of oppression, in a hierarchical binary, systematically and culturally rewarding the masculine as the privileged norm and marginalising and devaluing the feminine. Sexism can manifest through structures and institutions (academia, workplace, health care, etc.) and interpersonally through conscious or unconscious individual behaviours (e.g., bias). In sport, for example, we know that men are more likely to be given the opportunity to lead sports teams and organisations (Demers et al., 2019); men have higher media coverage despite high interest for women’s sport (Pegoraro et al., 2019); and young men are more likely to stay in sport than young women (and more likely to be encouraged to do so; CWS, 2020).

What “men and masculinity” and “women and femininity” mean is not universal, and therefore the particular impacts/effects of sexism may vary. What it means to be or perform a particular gender (e.g., man, woman, non-binary, two-spirit, cis, trans) is contextual, dependent on evolving cultural systems, and can and does change over time. Therefore, gender identity and personhood are flexible and culturally specific, with no natural set of gender expressions that exists cross-culturally (Scott, 2007).

Importantly, the performance and experience of gender is refracted by additional, overlapping systems of power and oppression, and it is impossible to tease out other aspects of identity from gender. Crenshaw (1989) coined the term “intersectionality” in academia to describe how various aspects of identity—particularly gender and race—needed to be understood as one whole, simultaneous experience instead of as two separated identities.

Gender and Gender-Based Violence in Sport

As seen in the forthcoming chapters, the study of gender-based violence in sport has to date been delimited by a focus on binary genders, specifically looking at the

experiences of girls and women. There is emerging research on the experiences of trans athletes and the experiences of racialised athletes and LGBTQ athletes and those with a disability; however, these studies have not explored experiences of violence from an intersectional lens. At present, the various aspects of one's identity have been explored as single and separate constructs rather than as intersecting aspects of oneself. Further the existing literature on athletes' experiences of gender-based violence tends to focus primarily on aspects of an athlete's identity rather than on the structures of oppression that make sport environments conducive to violence. Given the historical roots of sport, structured along binary genders, there is a long way to go to realise safe and inclusive sport experiences for all.

Conclusion

The three structures of cissexism, binarism, and sexism shape and are shaped by gender and are intimately related to kinds of gendered violence. Each of these structures also overlaps with other systems of oppression—colonialism and colonisation, racism, ableism, homophobia—making each person's gendered experiences of the world different. These systems make the kinds of gendered violence people experience interrelated, pervasive, embodied, and different to each other—they are structural and relational through space and over time. Resulting harms—which range from the physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, and existential, and on all levels of interaction (macro to micro)—all have real, material impacts. For example, women report exclusions from public spaces (such as walking home alone at night) due to fear of violence (Koskela, 1999), 68% of trans and non-binary people reported being the target of verbal harassment, 37% of physical intimidation or threats, 16% of physical violence, 42% of sexual harassment, and 26% of sexual assaults (Trans PULSE Canada, 2020), and violence is exacerbated against Black and Latinx trans women (Trans PULSE Canada, 2020; Human Rights Campaign, 2020). Women athletes are more likely to report physical and psychological harm and to have higher rates of sexual violence than men athletes (Willson et al., 2021); athletes who identified as racialised experienced higher rates of physical harm than athletes who did not identify as racialised (Vertommen et al., 2016); and athletes otherwise marginalised through identity-based systems are more likely to experience increased violence (Willson et al., 2021). Addressing gender-based violence means acknowledging the overlapping systems of oppression which shape experiences of gender and acting against them on all levels.

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Part II

Forms of Gender-Based Violence



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What Is Gender-Based Violence?

What Is Violence?

Gender-based violence is one of many forms of violence. Violence is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.

(World Health Organization, 2002, para. 2)

Several elements of this definition are important for understanding gender-based violence. Notably, violence does not have to result in harm; instead, the threat or potential for harm to occur is sufficient to constitute violence. The purposeful or deliberate use of force or power against another person or group is emphasized as a criterion of violence; this is important for distinguishing violence from injury or harms that may result from accidents or unintended actions. Considerations are given to the impacts of violence on physical and psychological health and development; as a result, the act of violence itself and the impacts of acts of violence are not always visible. Violence has been studied extensively across numerous fields of study, including in sport.

Typologies of Violence

Several typologies of violence have been proposed depending on the context, nature of the violence, nature of the relationship in which the violence occurs, and the purpose of the classification. The World Report on Violence and Health (WRVH) divides violence into three categories according to who has committed the violence: self-directed, interpersonal, and collective violence (Krug et al., 2002).

Self-directed violence is a broad term that includes forms of violence against oneself or self-harm such as suicidal thoughts or actions and self-mutilation. Interpersonal violence includes acts of violence that occur between individuals.

This form of violence may occur between those known to one another such as in the case of intimate partner violence, or abuse of elderly or child family members. Other instances of interpersonal violence can occur when individuals may not be known to one another or may not have close relationships as in the case of sexual assault by a stranger (WHO, 2002). Collective violence has been defined as the “instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group . . . against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic or social objectives” (Krug et al., 2002, p. 215). Examples of collective violence include genocide, terrorism, gang warfare, and the systematic abuses of human rights as seen in residential schools for Indigenous children (Accomazzo, 2012; Krug et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2005).

Researchers have also referred to structural violence or the physical and psychological harms that result from exploitative and unjust social, political, and economic systems (Rutherford et al., 2007). Given the ubiquitous nature of structural violence, it is often invisible, pervasive, normalised, and therefore resistant to change (Farmer, 2004; Winter & Leighton, 2001; Zakrisson et al., 2019). An example of structural violence is seen with existing pay inequities in the workforce and lack of compensation for domestic responsibilities for women globally (Rutherford et al., 2007). In Canada and other countries, the unjust and ill treatment of Indigenous peoples is another example of structural violence. The historic laws of the country prohibited the demonstration and passing along of their culture, destroyed their ways of life, children were removed from their families and sent to residential schools, and multiple forms of violence were inflicted (Smith et al., 2005).

Others have defined forms of violence by maltreatment. For example, the WHO Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention provides the following definition:

Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

(WHO et al., 1999, p. 15)

Maltreatment includes both abuse and neglect and is conceptualised based on the relationships in which these behaviours occur. For example, Crooks and Wolfe (2007) refer to relational disorders to describe the harms experienced by children in relationships. Crooks and Wolfe (2007, p. 640) define child maltreatment as “volitional or neglectful acts on the part of a child’s caregiver that result in or have the potential to result in physical injuries and/or psychological harm”. Child maltreatment can be defined in terms of the degree to which a parent/caregiver uses aversive or inappropriate control strategies in an attempt to inflict physical or emotional pain upon a child and/or fails to provide minimal standards of caregiving and nurturance. Child maltreatment is not considered as

a dichotomous construct; instead, it exists on a continuum, ranging from appropriate and developmentally sensitive behaviours to unhealthy patterns of adult-child interactions including abuse and neglect (Chalk, 2006; Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013).

Relational maltreatment may occur within a critical relationship or one in which the child depends upon the adult for need fulfillment, and a sense of trust and security. Commonly cited examples of critical relationships include those between a parent or guardian and child, a teacher and child, and more recently, this notion has been applied to child athletes and their coaches (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007; Stirling, 2009). Within these critical relationships, relational disorders consist of sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect. Non-relational maltreatment is proposed to encompass those harms that exist in non-critical relationships or those relationships between a child and adult that are not pivotal to meeting the child's needs, or sense of trust and security. For example, relationships between a child and a peer or a neighborhood acquaintance may be considered as non-critical. Stirling (2009) proposes that within non-critical relationships, non-relational maltreatment such as harassment and bullying, and institutional maltreatment may occur.

Child maltreatment is considered within ecological, transactional, and developmental frameworks (Chalk, 2006). As such, child maltreatment is socially constructed, shaped by language, generational, and cultural differences. For example, spanking a child is a normative practice in some cultures and a criminal offence in others (Gershoff, 2013; Lansford & Dodge, 2008; Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013). The fact that most child maltreatment occurs within the family reveals a number of underlying beliefs, including: (a) that parental rights supersede children's rights and that parents can and should have control over the development of their children; (b) that family members will act in the best interests of children who are not capable of caring for themselves; (c) that families rooted in traditional cultures are strong families, even though some of their cultural customs justify child maltreatment; and (d) that families have the right to privacy and autonomy even though this right often results in harm to vulnerable members (Levesque, 2001). Child maltreatment, therefore, occurs when the contextual norms of children's care have been violated and have the potential of significantly impairing a child's development (Chalk, 2006).

Importantly, all categories of violence and maltreatment are not mutually exclusive, and many forms interact, overlap, and occur simultaneously. For example, interpersonal violence is inherent in the use of rape as a weapon of war or collective violence. The cultural genocide inflicted upon Indigenous peoples in Canada is associated with structural violence such as economic exploitation and circumstances of poverty which in turn have led to increased vulnerability of children to maltreatment. Similarly, psychological maltreatment is both a stand-alone form of violence and is inherent in sexual and physical abuse, and neglect.

Forms of Violence

The World Report on Violence and Health (WRVH) further classifies forms of violence according to the nature of the violence, including physical, sexual, psychological violence or acts involving deprivation or neglect. This is consistent with the literature on child maltreatment which classifies harms according to sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013). Physical violence can include such acts as hitting, slapping, kicking, choking, being confined or restrained. For girls and women, genital mutilation is also a form of physical violence (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2019; Russo, 2019). Psychological violence can include threatening, degrading, berating, or humiliating comments, shaming, isolating, denial of attention and support, stalking, and manipulating behaviours. Sexual violence may include contact behaviours such as assault and inappropriate touching, or non-contact behaviours such as sexual remarks and the sharing of sexually explicit images without consent. Neglect is the omission of care or provision of needs or failure to provide care in accordance with expected societal standards for food, shelter, protection, and affection (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013).

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a particular form of violence that has been defined as “violence that is committed against someone based on their gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender” (Cotter & Savage, 2019, para. 1). Similarly, the European Commission’s (2014, p. 47) *Gender Equality in Sport: Proposal for Strategic Actions 2014–2020* provides the following definition: “violence directed against a person because of that person’s gender (including gender identity/expression) or as violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately”. The United Nations uses the term violence against women defined as:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

(1993, para. 14)

GBV is recognised as a global human rights concern given its prevalence across developed and developing countries (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2019; Russo, 2019).

It is important that gender-based violence is a separate and distinct category of violence because it recognises gender inequality, specifically the historical domination of men and women’s and girls’ subordinate status in society that serves to maintain an unequal balance of power (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2019; Russo, 2019; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). In Western cultures, this position of dominance held by men is specific to White men as men who are racialised, Indigenous, of sexual

minorities, and those with a disability are often victims of GBV, as well. Most victims of GBV therefore are women and girls and members of equity deserving groups (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2019).

Conceptualisations of gender-based violence are influenced by historical and cultural understandings, and thus cannot be uniformly understood or represented (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019). Similarly, in their writings of violence against children in sport, Brackenridge et al. (2010, p. 6) note that “countries approach the matter of violence against children in many different ways (including child labour; prevention of sexual/economic exploitation; health promotion; cultural or educational development)”.

Forms of Gender-Based Violence

The most commonly cited forms of GBV are physical, psychological, and sexual (Russo, 2019). Importantly, these forms of GBV may occur individually or may be overlapping and occur together. Psychological violence is inherent in neglect and physical and sexual violence but may also be a stand-alone form of violence. In addition, some authors include economic violence as a separate form of violence which may include taking away or hiding money, underpaying, or preventing a partner from earning money (Russo, 2019). Sometimes cyber violence is viewed as a separate form of violence while other times cyber violence is considered as the medium through which the other forms of violence may occur. Cyber violence may include such acts as making threatening or degrading comments, sharing sexually explicit pictures without consent, and stalking in online environments (Al-Alosi, 2017).

Using the WHO typology of violence presented earlier, gender-based violence includes self-directed violence such as self-starvation (e.g., anorexia nervosa) and cutting (Pickard, 2015), interpersonal violence such as domestic abuse and intimate partner sexual assault, collective violence against women and girls as a group such as female genital mutilation and “honour killings” (Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005, p. 821). Given the historical and sociocultural influences on GBV, developing a widely accepted definition is challenging (Henry, 2018; Mergaert et al., 2016).

Gender-based violence includes microaggressions or those frequent experiences and behaviours that reinforce stereotypes, biases, and structural violence (Strunk & Locke, 2019). Some examples of microaggressions include teasing, name-calling, and sexist or racist comments or jokes. These behaviours, which in isolation may be viewed as relatively minor and subtle, are included because they are not inconsequential (Krug et al., 2002; Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013; WHO, 2002). Instead, the effects can accumulate to have substantial deleterious impacts on the physical and psychological welfare of individuals (Sue et al., 2007) given their cumulative, ongoing, and pervasive nature. Further, the effects of these experiences may spill over to other domains of development; for example, receiving repeated, demeaning comments by a parent/guardian can extend to a lack of confidence in school or extra-familial relationships.

For children, a broad perspective of violence is supported by the UNCRC which states:

All forms of violence against children, however light, are unacceptable . . . Frequency, severity of harm and intent to harm are not prerequisites for the definitions of violence. State parties may refer to such factors in intervention strategies in order to allow proportional responses in the best interests of the child, but definitions must in no way erode the child's absolute right to human dignity and physical and psychological integrity by describing some forms of violence as legally and/or socially acceptable.

(2011, p. 8)

Similar to the definitions of violence, the threat of harm from the behaviour is of equal concern and severity as actual harm (Russo, 2019). Moreover, the potential psychological and physical harms, whether bruises or depression, need to be given equal weight (Russo, 2019). Many forms of GBV such as jokes, media portrayals, and pay scales are embedded in societal practices and as such have become normalised, legitimised, and inconspicuous, comprising forms of structural violence (Russo, 2019). This is especially true for girls and women and members of other equity-deserving groups (Government of Canada, 2022).

Prevalence of GBV Outside of Sport

Regardless of any other considerations, women are 20% more likely than men to be a victim of GBV (Perreault, 2015). When looking at sexual violence, prevalence rates of victimisation of girls and women between 15 and 24 years of age increases to 50% (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). In an Australian National survey, 27% of 1,218 women aged 16–85 years, reported experiencing GBV (Rees et al., 2011). In Awassa, Ethiopia, amongst a sample of 1,330 female college students, 46% had experienced GBV during their college experiences (Arnold et al., 2008). Findings from a Canadian survey of safety in public and private spaces indicated that women are twice as likely (32%) to experience unwanted sexual behaviour in a public space than men (Cotter & Savage, 2019). In the workplace, women are more likely (29% vs. 17%) to be the target of inappropriate sexual behaviour, often experienced through sexual jokes, remarks, and innuendos (Cotter & Savage, 2019). Of Canadian women, 15 years and older, 30% reported having been sexually assaulted outside of an intimate relationship and 26% reported experiences of physical assault (Cotter & Savage, 2019). The Canadian Women's Foundation (2016) reported that a Canadian woman is killed by her intimate partner every six days and 80% of police-reported homicide victims in 2014 were women.

Prevalence studies on child maltreatment indicate that neglect and psychological or emotional abuse are the most commonly reported experiences (Jud, 2018; Stoltenborgh et al., 2015). Contrary to the image conveyed by the media that sexual abuse is the most prevalent problem, experiences of neglect account

for close to 60% of all documented cases of child maltreatment (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013). History of child physical abuse is reported more often by males, whereas sexual abuse is reported more often by females. WHO (2004) estimates that 40 million children ages 0–14 years are victims of child abuse and neglect annually around the world.

GBV is influenced by the intersection of various forms of structural oppression. For example, Indigenous women's rates of spousal violence are three times that of non-Indigenous women (Heidinger, 2021). Regarding sexual assault, women with a disability have rates of violence nearly two times that of non-disabled women. The LGBTQ+ community is also affected by GBV, as women who are bisexual and lesbian report up to 3.5 times more partner violence than heterosexual women (Burczycka, 2016). Recognizing different structures of oppression and the intersections of these structures of oppression on experiences of violence is essential.

Gender-Based Violence in Sport

Although the positive narrative of sport remains strong in scholarly and public domains, namely that sport experiences provide numerous individual, community, and social benefits (Coakley, 2016; Holt, 2016), research evidence clearly points to the fact that violence is experienced by many sport participants (Brackenridge, 2001; Young, 2011). When addressing violence in sport, it is important to note that while aggression is inherent and permitted in many sports, the focus of this and the remaining chapters is violence occurring outside of the prescribed rules of the sport. Despite a substantial body of research on the prevalence, the nature of experiences, and impacts of GBV in contexts such as intimate partner violence, workplace harassment, school bullying, and child maltreatment in the home, less research on GBV in sport has been conducted, presumably because of the barriers posed by the assumptions of sport as an inherently positive context.

The study of gender-based violence in sport has been hampered by a lack of harmonised language and clearly operationalised terminology (Bekker & Posbergh, 2021). For example, key researchers in sport such as Brackenridge and Fasting refer to sexual exploitation with sexual harassment and abuse existing on a continuum of severity (Brackenridge, 1997; Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005). While these authors acknowledge that the roots of these experiences lie in gender-based violence, the continuum model leaves open questions about when harassment becomes abuse or vice versa, posing challenges to practitioners who must address these behaviours. The International Olympic Committee Consensus Statement (IOCCS) uses the umbrella term “non-accidental violence” to refer to various forms of harassment and abuse (Mountjoy et al., 2016). The authors also refer to non-accidental violence or maltreatment through harassment and abuse, conflating terms and adding further conceptual confusion. The term non-accidental violence originated from the field of medicine and physical abuse specifically to distinguish between accidents and deliberate acts; however, it begs the question, what of accidental violence? Is accidental violence not simply an accident?

As Bekker and Posbergh (2021) question, if preventing non-accidental violence is the intent, how does an organisation use and respond to the corollary, “accidental violence”? As Bekker and Posbergh (2021, p. 187) state: “To invoke the possibility for ‘accidental’ harm is misleading or negligent at best and may be actively violent at worst”. Other authors use the term maltreatment (Stirling, 2009), stemming from the child abuse and neglect literature. Although this term is often thought to be restricted to children, it has been extended to adults.

The study of gender-based violence in youth sport has emerged from a number of influences, including research on hegemonic masculinity, research on psychosocial development of young people, and rights-based work. In the 1980–1990s, feminist scholars in sport sociology (e.g., Brackenridge, 2002; Hall, 1985; Lenskyj, 1992; White & Brackenridge, 1985) were writing about male hegemony in sport. This work extended to include experiences of sexual violence, with a focus on that perpetrated by male authority figures in sport against female child and adult athletes (e.g., Brackenridge, 1997, 2001). This work provided an important foundation for further study into the occurrence, perpetuation, and silencing of girls’ and women’s experiences of gender-based violence in sport (Lang et al., 2021).

Research on GBV in sport has been and continues to be dominated by a focus on sexual violence experienced by girls and women but has expanded to include sexual violence against boys and men (Hartill, 2005), LGBTQ, intersex, and trans individuals (Wirtz et al., 2020). The 2000s saw the slow emergence of a focus on psychological violence. It should be noted that the early work of Orlick, Martens, and others in the 1970s and 1980s drew attention to psychologically harmful practices in sport such as verbal berating, public shaming, and social exclusion, although these behaviours were not framed as psychological violence at that time. Similarly, earlier concerns about the impacts of intensive training and early specialisation on the health and development of child athletes (Martens, 1978), while not presented as forms of GBV, were clearly grounded in power structures in sport, including those resulting from hegemonic masculinity. Despite the burgeoning body of research on GBV in sport, most of this inadequately acknowledges that the foundation of GBV is male hegemony and gender inequity (Brackenridge, 2001; Lang et al., 2021).

The study of gender-based violence in sport has also been informed by a growing body of research on child development, including an understanding that early life experiences influence later development, health, and well-being (e.g., Jaffee & Maikovich-Fong, 2011; Messman-Moore & Coates, 2007). Our understanding of developmentally appropriate methods of teaching, learning, and talent nurturing has also been enhanced through research in psychology, sociology, and education (e.g., Weininger, 2002).

Scholarship and advocacy regarding children’s rights have also driven much of the work on gender-based violence in sport. The ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 was pivotal in advancing research on children in sport although numerous researchers had been writing about children’s rights in sport long before the UNCRC. For example,

Kidd and Eberts (1982) wrote about athletes' rights in Canada, and Martens and Seefeldt published a Bill of Rights for Young Athletes in the United States in 1979; many other examples exist outside of North America and have influenced work on gender-based violence in children's sport.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the definitions, conceptualisations, and typologies of violence were reviewed. Gender-based violence is recognised as a distinct and important form of violence given its historical roots in the domination of men, specifically White men, and the subordination of girls and women, particularly those who are racialised, sexually diverse, Indigenous, or with a disability. This dominance continues today globally within and outside of sport as reflected in the violation of human and children's rights and the prevalence of girls' and women's experiences of gender-based violence.

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Psychological Violence in Children's Sport

Lucille was an internationally ranked athlete in an aesthetic sport. She and her teammates were between the ages of 17 and 21 years and had been training intensively in their sport since late childhood. Their coach, Monica, had been an Olympian in the sport and is widely regarded as one of the best coaches in the country having coached many previous athletes to the podium in international competitions. Monica is known for being a tough coach—very demanding, critical, and at times, harsh. When asked what leads Monica to be described in these ways, Lucille chuckles briefly and responds, “Well, she yells a lot . . . calls us names. I’ve been called a cow, a sloth, and other stuff.” Lucille continues, “she often threatens us with being kicked off the team if we aren’t doing our skills well in training.” The athletes know that they receive coaching instructions from Monica only when they perform well—otherwise, she ignores them. When asked how Lucille and her teammates manage being treated in these ways while trying to learn new skills and train well, Lucille responds with, “well, we know that’s just the way she is. She is the best coach around. If you want to get to the international stage, Monica is the one you want to train with. My teammates and I try to laugh it off. Sometimes her comments are so crazy that we all laugh behind her back . . . we just can’t get caught laughing at her or we’ll be kicked out of practice.” Lucille is asked whether there are times when she’s not laughing on the inside even when she’s laughing on the outside. Without pausing to think about a response, Lucille says, “Oh yes, it’s impossible to laugh at the ways she criticises us about our weight or appearance in front of everyone. We’ve been called “fat cows” . . . I’ve been told in front of everyone that my thighs are too big. She’ll pinch our stomachs, thighs or butts in training if she thinks we’ve put on weight. Our daily weights are posted on the board for everyone to see. If someone gains weight, they get criticised in front of everyone.” Lucille continues, “Monica got in trouble for her behaviour once at an international competition when people from another country reported her. When asked about their concerns, Lucille said, “they were concerned about what they observed in training about Monica’s coaching. They had watched her yelling and screaming at us in training. She was really, really, angry that day. We were all jet-lagged and weren’t training well. At one point, she was so angry she threw a chair at us. She blamed our poor training on being too fat . . . but really, we were just jet-lagged. But because she blamed us for being too fat, she took food off our plates at lunch after morning training. We couldn’t have sandwiches, juice or milk . . . we could only have salad without dressing, and an orange for dessert, and water to drink. We were so tired and hungry. Anyway, these people from [another country] submitted a formal complaint about Monica’s behaviour.” An investigation and hearing followed with a recommendation for a temporary suspension from coaching for Monica. Additionally, as a requirement of returning to coaching, Monica was to complete an educational programme with modules on appropriate psychological training methods and nutrition. Once she returned to coaching, monitoring and evaluation requirements would be implemented to ensure appropriate practices were being used. However, rather than accept the suspension and remedial education, Monica decided to leave the country and has been coaching elsewhere ever since.

What Is Psychological Violence?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 1999), psychological violence is defined as acts which include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling,

denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other nonphysical forms of hostile treatment or rejection. In sport, terms used interchangeably with psychological violence include emotional/psychological abuse and neglect, psychological maltreatment, and psychological harm (e.g., Krahn, 2020; Fortier et al., 2020; Stirling, 2009; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2021). For the purposes of this chapter, the term “psychological violence” will be used.

History of the Study of Psychological Violence

The study of psychological violence began in the field of child abuse where the term emotional abuse was used predominantly. Research in childhood emotional abuse burgeoned in the 1970s; at the time, there was general agreement that emotional abuse existed but there was a lack of consensus on a definition and without an operational definition, appropriate preventions and interventions were lacking. As a result, Garbarino called emotional abuse, the elusive “crime” (1978, p. 89). Garbarino noted that normal emotional development includes the ability to interact well with others, to love and be loved, and to feel good about oneself. The development of competence in terms of interpersonal skills and self-esteem forms the backdrop for Garbarino’s (1978, p. 92) definition of emotional abuse as “the willful destruction or significant impairment of a child’s competence”. Garbarino identified five modes of emotional abuse: rejection, isolation, terrorising, ignoring, and corrupting, all of which are viewed as basic threats to normal development.

Subsequently, O’Hagan (1995) defined emotional abuse as “The sustained, repetitive, inappropriate emotional response to the child’s experience of emotion and its accompanying expressive behaviour” (p. 456). Emotional abuse has been defined by the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention (World Health Organization, 1999) as including:

the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potentials and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. There may also be acts towards the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

(p. 15)

Glaser (2002) also defined emotional abuse as a relationship between a child and caregiver that is characterised by sustained patterns of non-physical, harmful, or maladaptive interactions.

Related to psychological violence is the work of Alice Miller (1980) who used the term “poisonous pedagogy” to refer to parenting and teaching methods that are repressive and potentially harmful. These poisonous methods are used to break the will of the child so the parent may ensure obedience, compliance, and pliability to conform to expectations. Examples of such methods include manipulation, scare tactics, humiliation, ridicule, withdrawal of attention, and corporal punishment. These methods are used for the child’s “own good”, to teach the child important life lessons and to toughen up the child to meet future life demands. At the core of poisonous pedagogy are fundamental beliefs that adults are the masters, deserving of respect because of their positions, and that children are strengthened through obedience (Miller, 1980). The concept of poisonous pedagogy is relevant to sport, given the characterisation of the coach-athlete relationship as a master-slave relationship (Crosset, 1986), and the acceptance of emotionally abusive coaching practices as normal and necessary for athletic development (Stirling & Kerr, 2014). Cushion and Jones (2006, p. 148) stated, “harsh, authoritarian and often belligerent coaching behaviour was viewed as a necessary aspect of preparing young players” by football coaches and athletes. Similarly, Seifried (2010) advocated for the use of corporal punishment in sport, in the form of exercise as punishment, based upon the belief that corporal punishment helps athletes understand and focus on requisite behaviours for athletic success. The suggestion that these sport practices are for the athlete’s own good resembles poisonous pedagogy.

The Study of Psychological Violence in Sport

One could argue that Garbarino’s description of psychological violence as an “elusive” crime persists in the world of sport today. Despite a recent increase in attention and scholarly research on psychological violence in sport, it remains under-studied, and a lack of conceptual clarity and operational definitions persist.

Forms of Psychological Violence

Psychological violence in sport has been characterised by such behaviours as: yelling, belittling and degrading comments, humiliation, threats, throwing objects to intimidate, intentional denial of attention and support, exclusion or expulsion from an activity, shaming, and discriminating against individuals or groups based on identity variables (Alexander et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2018; Nery et al., 2019; Stirling, 2009; Wilinsky & McCabe, 2020). Examples of previously documented verbal forms of psychological violence include athletes being called “worthless”, “disgusting”, “fat”, and “brutal” (Stirling & Kerr, 2008, p. 176). An example of a physical act of psychological violence is a swimmer’s story: “He [the coach] could be violent. I remember he would throw [flutter] boards at your head if you weren’t making the pace time. He threw pylons at you” (Stirling & Kerr, 2008, p. 175). Denial of attention and support are exemplified by the following athletes’ quotes: “My coach was mad at me for a week and wouldn’t speak to me at

practice”; “He [coach] stopped talking to me. He wouldn’t make eye contact with me or talk to me during workout . . .”, and “She [coach] treated me like absolute crap and acted as if I didn’t exist” (Stirling & Kerr, 2008, p. 176).

Gervis and Dunn (2004) found that shouting, belittling, threats, and humiliation were the most common forms of emotional abuse experienced in sport, with more reported abusive behaviours occurring once the athletes reached the elite level. Some researchers have also suggested that non-contact physical behaviours (e.g., excessive training or exercise as punishment) as well as neglectful behaviours (e.g., chronic exclusion) are also forms of psychological violence or psychological maltreatment (see Fortier et al., 2020; Parent et al., 2019).

More recently, body shaming has been added to the list of psychologically abusive behaviours in sport (McMahon et al., 2021; Pinheiro et al., 2014; Willson & Kerr, 2021). In 2019, Mary Cain, a running prodigy in the U.S.A. and a former member of Nike’s Oregon Project, alleged experiences of psychological abuse from her coach. In addition to experiencing constant verbal threats, she experienced public weigh-ins where she was humiliated, and body shamed in front of other athletes and subjected to harmful dieting practices (Cain, 2019). Similar experiences were reported by eight female National Team athletes in aesthetic sports in a qualitative study (Willson & Kerr, 2021). These athletes described experiencing negative verbal comments about their bodies, body monitoring, forced restrictions of food and water, public criticism of the body, and punishment when body-related standards were not met. The authors propose that body-related shaming should be considered a form of emotional abuse.

How Common Is Psychological Violence in Sport?

Across existing prevalence studies, psychological violence is consistently the most commonly reported form of interpersonal violence in sport. This finding has been replicated across various populations of athletes and across countries and may be surprising to the reader given the almost exclusive focus on sexual violence in the media.

In the U.K., Alexander et al. (2011) and Stafford et al. (2015) examined harmful experiences of young people (18–22 years of age) up until the age of 16 and found that emotional harm was most frequently reported (75%). However, the Alexander et al. (2011) findings should be interpreted with caution given its retrospective design and very low response rate of 10%.

Vertommen et al. (2016) explored 4,000 Belgium and Dutch adults’ experiences of interpersonal violence in sport before the age of 18 via a questionnaire and reported that 38% of all respondents reported experiences with psychological violence. Further, within this study, Vertommen et al. (2016) classified behaviours on a severity scale, extending previous studies that have not considered the severity of the behaviours; specifically, they reported that the prevalence of severe forms of psychological violence (e.g., threatened with being thrown out of the team) was 9%. A caveat of this study was its reliance on adults’ memories of childhood sport experiences.

Parent and Vaillancourt-Morel (2020) assessed interpersonal violence experiences of 1,055 current youth athletes, 14–17 years of age, and found that 79.2% of athletes reported at least one experience of psychological violence. The high rate of psychological violence in this study may be attributed to the classification of these behaviours; specifically, the psychological violence subscale included some items classified in previous studies as physical abuse/violence and neglect (Alexander et al., 2011; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2021).

Results from the 2020 U.S. Climate Survey (U.S. Center for Safe Sport, 2021) of 3,959 adult athletes (including 151 Olympians/Paralympians and 56 medalists) from more than 50 sports indicated that approximately 65% of athlete participants indicated experiencing at least one of 18 indicators of psychological violence, including neglect. The most frequently reported behaviours of psychological harm, in order of frequency were: people gossiped or told lies about you, you were put down, embarrassed or humiliated, you were pressured to try new skills before you felt ready, your mental or emotional health was ignored, your athletic needs were ignored, you were criticised as a person when your performance was sub-par, and you were shouted at in a frightening, threatening, or belittling manner.

These findings were mirrored by those of Willson et al. (2021) who explored the experiences of maltreatment amongst 995 (current and retired) Canadian National Team members ($M = 27.7$ years of age) across 60 different sports. Responses to an anonymous, online survey revealed that psychological harm was the most prevalent form of maltreatment; specifically, 59% of current athletes and 62% of retired athletes reported at least one form of psychological harm, with 24% of athletes reporting experiences of psychological harm on a repeated basis. The most commonly reported behaviours of psychological harm were being shouted at in an angry or critical manner, being gossiped about, having lies told about the individual, being put down, embarrassed, or humiliated, being intentionally ignored in response to poor performance, and being criticised as a person.

A recent paper using some previously published prevalence data from athletes from the Netherlands and Belgium (Vertommen et al., 2016) and new data from a German sample of elite athletes (Ohlert et al., 2021) revealed that 72% of the respondents to a survey reportedly had experienced psychological violence in their sport. Additionally, 18% of the sample reported severe psychological violence. The findings highlight the co-occurrence of forms of violence.

Hartill and colleagues' (2021) study of interpersonal violence in children's organised sport across six European countries indicated that 65% of 10,302 respondents reported an experience of psychological violence in sport. Behaviours such as ignoring, humiliating comments, shouting, excluding children and withholding praise were reported. Qualitative studies have also indicated the fairly common experience of psychological violence in sport. For example, Gervis and Dunn (2004) interviewed 12 former elite child athletes and found that all reported being frequently shouted at, belittled, threatened, and humiliated, while half the participants said they were ignored or rejected, and one third said their coaches isolated them. Stafford et al. (2015) reported that amongst the emotionally abusive behaviours experienced by athletes, 39% reported being ignored in a

way that made them feel badly, 34% said that they had been called names, and 19% had lies and rumours spread about them. Importantly, and consistent with the findings from child maltreatment studies, amongst all forms of psychological violence, experiences that involve the intentional denial of attention and support have been reportedly most harmful (Battaglia et al., 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2008).

Despite differences in conceptualisation and measurement, collectively, these studies highlight the common experience of psychological violence and specific forms of psychological violence. However, it is important to note that the extent to which comparisons regarding the prevalence of psychological violence across studies can be made remains difficult, as researchers utilise various measures and may define behaviours differently. For example, Parent and Vaillancourt-Morel (2020) and U.S. Safe Sport grouped psychological violence and neglect together, whereas Willson et al. (2021) separated the assessment of these constructs. In addition, the retrospective nature of most existing prevalence studies highlights potential problems of recall biases.

Psychological Violence and Experiences of Equity-Deserving Athletes

Research on psychological violence has begun to explore the experiences of athletes from equity-deserving groups. Stafford et al. (2015) and Vertommen et al. (2016) reported no significant gender differences in psychologically harmful experiences; however, Parent and Vaillancourt-Morel (2020), U.S. Safe Sport (Center for Safe Sport, 2021), and Willson et al. (2021) found that females reported significantly more psychologically harmful experiences compared to males. More specifically, U.S. athletes who identified as women and gender nonconforming/transgender/other gender identity, as well as those who identified with a disability experienced more psychological harm and neglect than those who identified as men or without a disability (U.S. Center for Safe Sport, 2021). Willson et al. (2021) also reported that athletes who identified as women experienced significantly more psychological violence than those who identified as men.

Vertommen et al. (2016) found that nearly half (49.7%) of para-athletes reported psychological violence and athletes who identified as lesbian/gay/bisexual experienced higher rates of all forms of interpersonal violence. In contrast, although 20% of Canadian national team para-athletes reported experiences of repeated psychological harm, there were no significant differences from non-para-athletes (Willson et al., 2021).

Violence through microaggressions such as negative stereotypes, discriminatory attitudes and behaviours have been reported by athletes from equity-deserving groups (Denison et al., 2020; Fitzgerald, 2020; Kirby et al., 2008; Parent & Fortier, 2018). For example, Symons et al. (2017) surveyed 294 non-heterosexual sporting people (e.g., athletes, officials, administrators) in Australia and found that these participants frequently experienced sexism and homophobia, with women reporting more experiences of sexism and men reporting more homophobic events. Baiocco et al. (2018) examined homophobia and bullying in a sample of gay and

heterosexual men; the results showed that gay men reported more frequent bullying and homophobic bullying than heterosexual men. Gay men also reported dropping out of sports more frequently, primarily due to a fear of being bullied and greater familial pressure to conform to masculine-type sports (Baiocco et al., 2018).

Microaggressions are also experienced by those who are racially and ethnically diverse. As a Middle Eastern athlete, Mary noted how some teammates questioned the appropriateness of her competing in sport:

The comments [teammates] made about my ethnicity would go overboard at times. Guys asked if I received permission from my father to swim and whether I was going to get stoned for showing my skin and hair . . . There was this one time when a guy threw a towel on my head and called it the swimmer's hijab, which was just disturbing. And I'm a Christian Middle Eastern, so we aren't required to wear a hijab . . . just ignorant and disrespectful.

(Gurgis et al., 2022)

Another athlete who identified as White, heterosexual, and physically disabled, shared her personal experiences of psychological violence from teammates:

I hear what others say. "Why is she even here?" "Go easy on her." "They feel bad for her." "She should swim with her kind." It's hurtful. I struggle because I see myself as an athlete. You ask me, I'm a swimmer. I'm not a female swimmer, I'm not a disabled swimmer, I'm a swimmer.

(Gurgis et al., 2022)

For further information on harmful experiences, including psychological violence, reported by athletes from equity-deserving groups, see Kavoura and Kokkonen (2020) and Menzel et al. (2019).

Actors of Psychological Violence

Coaches

When examining experiences of maltreatment amongst current and former Canadian National Team athletes, Willson et al. (2021) indicated that coaches were the most frequently reported actor of psychological harm. Vertommen et al. (2017) found coaches encompassed only 38% of the perpetration of psychological violence with the main actors being peers. As the level of sport increases, coaches (specifically males) increasingly become a frequent source of emotional and psychological harm (Parent & Fortier, 2017; Stafford et al., 2015; Vertommen et al., 2017; Willson et al., 2021).

Interestingly, even when coaches are not direct actors of psychological violence, researchers have highlighted their indirect involvement. For example, Alexander et al. (2011) noted that a third of participants reporting emotional harm said coaches were involved, either participating directly, or indirectly by creating a

culture where such behaviour was condoned or not dealt with effectively. Within hazing literature, findings have also indicated that coaches play a critical role in whether such rituals are enforced or adopted. Recent research exploring college athletes from the United States and Canada found that 33% and 40% of athletes, respectively, reported their coach had some knowledge about hazing occurrences and 25% and 33% reported their coaches were present during the hazing (Allan et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2018). Accordingly, coaches often influence the extent to which psychologically harmful practices are normalised, adopted, and enacted by teammates and other stakeholders in sport (Battaglia et al., 2018; Kowalski & Waldron, 2010; Stirling & Kerr, 2014)

Peers

Several prevalence studies have reported that peers surpass coaches as the most common instigator of psychological violence. For example, Stafford et al. (2015) found that the most common perpetrators of emotional abuse were peers or teammates (81% main sport and 79% secondary sport). Likewise, Vertommen et al. (2017) reported that peers or other athletes (82%) were the most common perpetrators of psychological violence; specifically, male peers were identified more frequently than female peers. A potential explanation for these differences pertains to the age of the participants in the studies. Stafford et al. (2015) and Vertommen et al. (2017) required participants to retrospectively report on harmful sport experiences under the age of 18 years. Conversely, Willson et al. (2021) inquired about experiences throughout the athletes' National Team careers which would have included psychological violence experienced over the age of 18 years; peers in this study were recognised as the second most common perpetrator of psychological harm. The equivocal findings regarding actors of psychological violence may be attributed to the reliance on recall, different samples of participants, and differing conceptualisations and measurements of psychological violence.

Harmful peer-peer interactions in sport have been identified in the bullying literature (Evans et al., 2016; Jewett et al., 2020; Nery et al., 2019, 2020). Bullying is defined as repeated actions that have a hostile intent and that involve a power differential between the perpetrator and the victim (Olweus, 1993). Bullying has been divided into four categories: verbal (e.g., name calling, making threats/remarks), social (e.g., social exclusion, spreading rumours), physical (e.g., hitting, punching), and cyber (e.g., occurring through computers and/or text; Wang et al., 2009). While there has been extensive literature on bullying in schools (Merrell et al., 2008), there is limited research in the sport domain (Kerr et al., 2016). The existing research on bullying in sport identifies the frequency of psychologically harmful peer interactions. Mishna et al. (2019) surveyed 122 post-secondary Canadian student-athletes to investigate the prevalence of bullying and cyberbullying in sport; 48% of athletes reported being a victim of bullying, 31% reported being a bully, and 62% reported witnessing bullying behaviours. Specifically, with regards to verbal and social bullying (behaviours that may constitute psychological violence), victimisation, perpetration, and witnessing for

verbal bullying was 29.5%, 5.7%, and 38.5% respectively, whereas social bullying was 19.47%, 13.9%, and 37.7%. The change room has been identified as a place where bullying amongst teammates occurs. An athlete in Ríos et al.'s (2022) study reported,

They hid things from me in the changing room, and they did it often . . . they also insulted me. They grabbed my T-shirt, walked out of the change room's door, and started running. Then, I had to go out in my underwear to look for my things because I didn't have my clothes.

Hazing, or “any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers, regardless of the person's willingness to participate” (Hoover & Pollard, 2000, p. 3) is a concern amongst peers in the sport domain. For example, research conducted in the United Kingdom, Canada, and United States has found that between 42% and 74% of college athletes reported engaging in at least one hazing behaviour (Allan & Madden, 2013; Allan et al., 2019; Hamilton et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2018). Further, Waldron (2015) reported that 27% of high-school athletes experienced mild hazing (e.g., being cursed at or having food thrown at you), and 31% experienced severe hazing (e.g., being hit, being kicked, or engaging in sexual acts). Under-reporting is generally accepted within the bullying literature given the pressures on athletes to stay silent; otherwise, negative repercussions are incurred. For additional information on hazing see Waldron (2020).

Parents

Existing research regarding the role of parents in sport has highlighted problematic parent-athlete interactions, such as yelling on the sidelines, pressuring behaviours, ignoring the child when failing to meet expectations, and agreeing with the coaches' use of punitive tactics (Battaglia et al., 2020; Holt & Knight, 2014; Knight et al., 2020; Smits et al., 2017). Although these behaviours have not been labelled as psychological violence, they share commonalities with coach and peer-driven behaviours identified as such. Other researchers of psychological violence in sport have highlighted how parents, similar to athletes, rely heavily on the coach, and thus become complicit regarding harmful practices. For example, Smits et al. (2017) and Kerr and Stirling (2012) examined parents' perspectives of their child's experiences of emotional abuse and found that parents were often silent bystanders. In fact, despite recognising behaviours as having the potential to be problematic, parents often deferred to the expertise of the coach and normalised these practices within sport. Additionally, Yabe et al. (2019a) found that the acceptance and normalisation of abuse, including verbal abuse, by parents was influenced by their own previous experiences of abuse within the coach-athlete dynamic. Interestingly, some athletes have also reported emotional abuse from another athlete's parent (within their own club and in other clubs), which

included being tormented, being told not to win, or being accused of cheating (McPherson et al., 2017).

Fans

An emerging line of research which may be linked to psychological violence in sport is (negative) fan interactions with athletes over social media (Kelly, 2015; Kitchin et al., 2020). For example, research has revealed that fans make belittling, critical, and aggressive comments of a psychological, sexual, physical, discriminatory (e.g., homophobia), and/or personal essence towards athletes or other sport figures (e.g., coaches) on social media (e.g., Kavanagh et al., 2016; Sanderson, 2013; Sanderson & Emmons, 2014; Sanderson & Truax, 2014). Central to these experiences is the idea of public shaming. MacPherson and Kerr (2021) examined fan comments on various social media platforms directed towards professional athletes and found that fans publicly shamed athletes for perceived violations by withdrawing support, and expressing desires for physical, psychosocial, and career-related consequences for the athletes. Further, MacPherson and Kerr (2020) examined the implicit meanings delivered through fans' social media responses to perceived violations by professional athletes and reported that fans' comments were gendered, sexist, and hegemonic. Specifically, fans responded to athletes' norm violations by objectifying women, blaming women for sexual assaults, and perpetuating rape culture. Psychological violence in sport enacted via cyber mechanisms remains an important area for future research.

Other Actors in Sport

There is currently a lack of research exploring psychological violence from parents or other sport authority figures (e.g., sport doctors, massage therapists, sport psychologists). To address this gap in the literature, Alexander et al. (2011) expanded their survey to include other adults in the sport club (e.g., caretaking staff or volunteer helpers) as well as a general "other" category; findings indicated that perpetration of emotional harm from other adults in the club was 6% and 5% from "others external to the club." Similarly, Vertommen et al. (2017) found that 34% of incidents of psychological violence was perpetrated by known others (e.g., medical staff, board members, referees) and 8% by others unknown (e.g., fans). Willson et al. (2021) also identified the importance of other adults in sport, including high performance directors, sport administrators, trainers, and parents, as actors of psychological harm given the position of power and authority they hold over athletes.

Normalisation of Psychological Violence

While Garbarino referred to psychological violence as an "elusive" crime, one may also propose that in sport, it is also endemic. Numerous researchers have

highlighted the normalisation of psychological violence in sport, noting its acceptance by coaches, athletes, and parents alike, as a normal practice. For example, Kerr and Stirling (2012) proposed that parents of elite athletes come to accept harmful practices through a process of socialisation; beginning with trust of the coach and relinquishing control to the coach; initial concerns but expressions of these concerns lead to negative repercussions for their child; seeing that other parents are not concerned about the practices; and reluctant acceptance. Smits et al. (2017) reported that parents of current and retired elite gymnasts accepted abusive practices because they thought that these practices were normal in that particular context. Further, McMahon et al. (2018) found that parents accepted and normalised abusive practices by coaches because they believed these practices were necessary to produce optimal athletic performance and that the coach knew best. In addition to athletes' and parents' acceptance of psychologically abusive practices in sport, sport administrators and coaches reportedly normalize these practices. For example, Jacobs et al. (2017) reported that directors and managers of sport clubs acknowledged that some coaching behaviours such as emotional abuse may be inappropriate but accepted them as an inevitable aspect of youth sport. Coaches in this study admitted they did everything possible to have control over athletes for performance outcomes and viewed toughness as a pre-requisite for performance success, including the ability to cope with a lot of criticism.

Returning to the Case Involving Lucille

There are many behaviours described in Lucille's story that can be characterised as psychological violence, including repeated and sustained name-calling, denial of attention and support when performance is sub-par, threats of being removed from the team, and shaming the athletes based upon their weight or appearance, often in a public manner. Lucille also demonstrates normalisation of psychological violence in the sport context when she talks about coping with psychologically violent coaching behaviours by accepting "that's just the way she [coach] is". Lucille's coach, Monica, wields significant power over the athletes based upon her background as an Olympian in the sport and her widely accepted reputation of training athletes to be competitive on the international stage.

Conclusion

Over the last several years, researchers have expanded the study of gender-based violence to include psychological violence. Although psychological violence is inherent with sexual and physical violence and neglect, it is also a stand-alone form of violence. In fact, prevalence studies across various samples and countries highlight the predominance of psychological violence as a stand-alone form of violence compared to other forms. Predominant forms of psychological violence include verbal acts, physical acts, denial of attention and support, and body shaming. Further, athletes who are at more competitive levels of the sport system and

those from equity-deserving groups such as girls, women, diverse gender identities and expressions, abilities, races, and those with disabilities, tend to report increased experiences of psychological violence.

While gender-based violence can manifest through emotional or psychological violence, the existing prevalence studies did not ask whether the athletes believed their experiences of violence were due to or related to their gender, gender identity or expression (Lang et al., 2021). However, this gap in our knowledge does not diminish the significance of better understanding the experiences of psychological violence, particularly given its normalisation in sport contexts (Jacobs et al., 2017; Lang, 2021; Stafford et al., 2015; Smits et al., 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2014) and the negative impacts on athlete health and well-being.

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Neglect in Children's Sport

Introduction

Of the four forms of child maltreatment, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect (Cicchetti & Toth, 2005), neglect is reportedly the most common form in children (Dubowitz, 2013; Mennen et al., 2010). In a 2008 Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (Trocmé et al., 2008) cases investigated by child welfare, the two most frequently occurring categories of substantiated maltreatment were neglect (34%) and exposure to intimate partner violence (34%). Yet, neglect is the least understood and researched form of violence in sport. Complicating our understanding of neglect is that it is ambiguously defined. Researchers rely on legal definitions, which often vary by region and jurisdiction (Dubowitz, 2013; Mennen et al., 2010) as well as by the child welfare

Marisa was a gifted young athlete in the sport of artistic swimming. As a child athlete, she had a physique well-suited to the sport, with a slender build and long limbs. She learned technical skills very quickly, winning her age-category competitions and the praise of her coaches. By all accounts, she was a star. When she reached puberty however, she lost her slender build as her body fat increased and she started to develop hips and breasts. With these physical changes, Marisa found it more difficult to perform technically. Neither Marisa or her coaches were happy with these changes and her coaches demonstrated their displeasure by engaging Marisa in daily weigh-ins, recommended restricted diets, and making negative comments about her body and weight, often in front of the other athletes. Desperate to regain her pre-puberty slender lines and performance success, Marisa started to deprive herself of food, and when the urge to eat overcame her and she indulged, she subsequently purged. Marisa's appearance started to change as did the number on the weigh scale, which, to her delight, got lower and lower. Her coaches were also pleased with the changes, and Marisa received extensive praise from her coaches for showing the dedication to lose weight, praise offered in public settings. However, Marisa's mother's concerns grew as she watched her daughter refuse to eat or leave the table for the bathroom quickly after a family meal together. Marisa's mother took her to a professional who diagnosed Marisa with an eating disorder. The professional recommended psychological counselling and interventions with the coaches aimed at stopping the daily weigh-ins and any comments about Marisa's body. When Marisa's mother shared the diagnosis and treatment plan with Marisa's coaches, they agreed to stop the weigh-ins and negative comments but expressed hope that the treatment wouldn't prevent Marisa from losing weight. They emphasised that the judging code was fixed and rewarded swimmers with slender bodies and straight lines and that their jobs were to ensure the athletes performed well according to the judging code. As time went on, it became clear that the coaches ignored the diagnosis of an eating disorder and failed to comply with the medical recommendations for interventions as they continued to weigh Marisa and make negative comments about her body and weight.

services that preside in each region (Fallon et al., 2020). The next section will explore the definition, forms, and effects of neglect, followed by a review of the limited research on neglect in sport.

Definitions

In the context of child maltreatment, neglect has been defined as a deficiency of reasonable care by a person in a caregiving capacity (Glaser, 2002), deficits in meeting a young person's basic needs, and deprivation of attention and nurturing (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007; Iwaniec, 2003). More specifically, neglect has been defined as occurring when "the family environment or the person who is responsible for the child does not meet their basic needs in relation to health, education, emotional development, nutrition, accommodation and safety" (Alexander et al., 2011). Neglect is considered a relational disorder, a disorder occurring in the context of a critical relationship—one in which an individual's sense of safety, trust, and fulfillment of needs depends upon the actions of the person in a greater position of power (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007). The World Health Organization (1999) defines neglect as:

The failure to provide for the development of the child . . . in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers, and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

(p. 15)

In other words, when there is a responsibility to fulfill a child's needs, and this responsibility is not fulfilled, neglect is said to have occurred. Unlike abuse which results from acts of commission, neglect represents acts of omission.

Challenges With Definitions

Two approaches have characterised the definitions of child neglect; one is parent/caregiver-centred and focuses on the parent's failure to act on their responsibility, and the other is child-centred and focuses on the effects on the child (Dubowitz, 2013). Research on neglect began with a parent/caregiver-centred approach, focusing on parents/caregivers and their failure to meet the child's needs. The Government of Canada defines neglect in accordance with this parent-centered approach as "failure by a parent or caregiver to provide the physical or psychological necessities of life to a child" (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 1). In the athlete maltreatment literature, scholars have relied on the child maltreatment definitions of neglect such as: "failure to provide for basic needs, or to protect from harm or potential harm" (Kerr et al., 2019, p. 18). One criticism of this approach is the potential role that situational influences such as poverty, poor health, or substance addiction of the caregiver can play in a caregiver's ability to meet the

child's needs. Rather than considering a single instance or mistake constituting neglect, a focus on a sustained pattern of behaviour is important.

In recognition of the many extraneous influences on a caregiver's ability to meet the needs of a child, an alternative approach to defining neglect is more child-centred and focuses on occurrences when a "child's basic needs are not adequately met" (Dubowitz, 2013, p. 2). Advantages of a child-centered definition include the recognition that neglect of a child's needs may stem from multiple contributing factors in addition to a parent's lack of action, and its emphasis on involving families in a constructive approach to resolving the problems rather than placing blame (Dubowitz, 2013). Some definitions merge these two approaches as seen in the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (OISRCAN) which addresses both the implications for the child and the role of the parent: "The child has suffered harm or the child's safety or development has been endangered as a result of a failure to provide for or protect the child" (Fallon et al., 2015, p. 101).

Another difficulty in defining neglect is related to the fact that need fulfillment exists on a continuum, ranging from optimal care at one end to grossly inadequate care at the other, and many degrees of fulfillment in between the two poles (Dubowitz, 2013; Dubowitz et al., 1993). With a continuum approach, questions are raised about when actions meet or exceed the threshold of inadequate fulfillment of needs and pose a risk of or result in harm (Dubowitz, 2013). Further, although the identification of a single act of neglect may be possible with a continuum perspective, the classification of a repeated pattern or ongoing failure to fulfill one's responsibility to provide care may be more difficult.

In addition to neglect occurring when adults who have a duty to care for children fail in fulfilling this duty, entire systems as a whole can also be neglectful. For example, in Canada's history, residential schools for Indigenous children were put in place as a result of systemic racism, resulting in atrocious neglect of an entire culture. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, institutional neglect may constitute a form of neglect.

Despite the conceptual challenges of defining neglect, various forms have been proposed and will be addressed next.

Forms of Neglect

Although researchers have used various terms to describe forms of neglect, general categories have emerged based either on the inaction of the actor or the effects on the recipient. For example, Mennen and colleagues (2010) proposed "supervisory neglect" which focuses on the failure of the responsible adult to supervise the child, resulting in some type of actual or potential harm. In contrast, Fallon and colleagues (2015) discussed subtypes of supervisory neglect based on the effects on the victim, including physical harm, sexual abuse, or allowance of criminal behaviour. A meta-analysis conducted on child neglect indicated three subtypes: physical, emotional, and educational (Stoltenborgh et al., 2013). Others (Stirling,

2009) have proposed four types of neglect in sport: physical, educational, emotional, and social.

For the purposes of this chapter, the forms of neglect will be described on the basis of objective behaviours and not whether harms result.

Physical Neglect

Physical neglect is defined as the failure to provide basic needs such as food, clothing, and/or appropriate hygiene (Mennen et al., 2010). As defined by Fallon and colleagues (2015) in the OISRSAN report, physical neglect occurs when a child is at risk of suffering physical harm resulting from the parent/caregiver's failure to adequately provide for and care for the child. Physical neglect may threaten one's basic physiological needs for food, hydration, and warmth, or the needs for safety and security, as in the case of a caregiver failing to provide the necessities of life such as sufficient food or warmth, or failing to provide a safe environment, leaving the child at risk of harming themselves. The failure to provide medical care when appropriate, for an injury, illness, or disability (Mennen et al., 2010) has been conceptualised as either medical or physical neglect. Fallon and colleagues (2015) highlight that the failure to provide medical care can be characterised by not providing, refusing, or being unable/unavailable to allow the medical care to occur, including psychological treatment. When a child is suffering from psychological challenges (anxiety, depression, etc.) that are impacting the child's development and where the parent fails, refuses, or is unable/unavailable to consent to psychological treatment that would aid the child, neglect is said to occur (Dubowitz, 2013; Fallon et al., 2015).

Physical neglect in sport could include a coach failing to provide medical attention for an athlete's injury (Stirling, 2009). According to Fortier et al. (2020), physical neglect includes such actions as failing to supervise a child athlete in the sporting context; allowing a child athlete to participate in a training or competition while injured, despite having received medical advice not to do so; knowing that a child athlete is engaging in problematic eating behaviours in order to achieve the ideal weight in his or her sport without intervening; failure to ensure the safety of athletic equipment; and refusing to provide a child athlete with the necessary medical care specific to a health problem that has been diagnosed by a professional and resulted from the practice of his sport. Regarding the last example from Fortier et al., as "refusing" is an act of commission, it may better be replaced with "failing" to reflect an act of omission. If, for example, sport leaders fail to comply with medical or health professionals' recommendations that an athlete engage in modified training due to an eating disorder or concussion, these actions may constitute neglect. Interestingly, these authors did not include manifestations of physical neglect related to food, clothing, proper living conditions, and hygiene, taking the position that these are responsibilities of the family rather than of those in the sport context. However, one may argue that sport leaders are in the position of *in loco parentis* while travelling with young athletes and thus have a duty of

care over the athletes' welfare, including the provision of sufficient food, hydration, or safe accommodations.

Supervisory Neglect

Some authors refer to supervisory neglect within the category of physical neglect while others refer to it in its own category. Supervisory neglect (Mennen et al., 2010) is a failure to provide adequate supervision of a child, where abandoning or leaving a child alone leads to the potential risk of injury or harm. Dubowitz (2013) proposed a similar form, called inadequate protection from environmental hazards, which occurs when there is a lack of or improper supervision or protection. The OISRSAN also highlighted failure to supervise as a type of neglect and separated this into three sub-types based on the effect on the victim: physical harm, sexual abuse, and permissance of criminal behaviour. Failure to supervise leading to physical harm is when the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering physical harm due to the parent's (or caregiver's) failure to supervise the child adequately (Fallon et al., 2015). Failure to supervise is not only a lack of physical presence or visual monitoring but can also be classified as driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol or pursuing dangerous criminal activities with the child (Fallon et al., 2015). Failure to supervise resulting in sexual abuse is when the child has been or is at risk of experiencing sexual violence and the parent/caregiver failed to protect the child knowing or being responsible for knowing that the sexual abuse was a possibility (Fallon et al., 2015). Failure to supervise resulting in the permitting of criminal behaviour may occur when the child has committed a crime due to the parent/caregiver's failure or inability to supervise adequately (Fallon et al., 2015). In sport, a lack of supervision by a sport leader over children's participation in sport activities may constitute a form of neglect.

Educational Neglect

Educational neglect is the failure to provide for the educational needs of the child (Mennen et al., 2010), and may be characterised by not allowing, not enrolling, or hindering a child's education (Fallon et al., 2015). Educational neglect can also occur within sport settings when there is a failure to incorporate athletes' academic needs into the training schedule, leaving insufficient time allocated from athletic training and travel demands to enable athletes to meet academic requirements. Fortier et al. (2020) also cite the example of asking a child athlete to drop out of school or take a break from school in order to practice a sport.

Emotional Neglect

Stoltenborgh and colleagues (2013) define emotional neglect as "the failure to meet children's emotional needs" (p. 346). It also includes instances of inadequate nurturing and affection, permitting disruptive behaviour to the child's development,

not seeking help for behavioural problems, as well as, allowing children to witness violence (Stoltenborgh et al., 2013). Emotional neglect may be represented by failing to acknowledge or respond to an athlete's feelings of distress. Within the emotional neglect category, Fortier et al. (2020) include permissive attitude towards the antisocial or criminal behaviour of a child athlete such as: letting a child athlete behave in a violent manner towards another athlete without intervening; letting a child athlete endure violent acts from another athlete without intervening; allowing an athlete to consume alcohol or drugs during activities related to the sport (e.g., team party, competitions, tournaments); letting a child athlete consume doping products or adopt doping methods without intervening; knowing that a child athlete has been physically, sexually, or psychologically abused or neglected and not acting; and refusing to provide psychological care to a child athlete when the athlete clearly needs it. The authors also include as an example of emotional neglect the abandonment of a child athlete in the context of sport such as during a training assignment, a competition, or during a trip; other authors would classify this as supervisory neglect. It is not clear from these examples whether they represent acts of commission, as in the case of "refusing" or "allowing", which could instead be forms of emotional abuse, or whether they are acts of omission.

Although some authors classify social neglect as a form of emotional neglect (Fortier et al., 2020), others argue that it is a stand-alone form of neglect (Stirling, 2009). Social neglect could include the failure to provide adequate time or opportunities for an athlete to develop or maintain relationships with family and friends needed at their stage of development.

Prevalence of Neglect in Sport

Despite the existence of several prevalence studies of interpersonal violence in sport, only a few have included neglect as a construct of interest. In Parent and Vaillancourt-Morel's (2020) prevalence study of 1,055 athletes between the ages of 14 and 17 years, who anonymously completed an online survey about their experiences of various types of interpersonal violence in sport, 35.7% reported at least one incidence of neglect. In this study, identifying as a girl, being older, in an early specialisation sport, and having a high number of hours of weekly practice were related to higher odds of reporting psychological violence or neglect. In another study of 995 Canadian National Team athletes, 18 years of age and older, from 64 sports who completed an anonymised survey of incidences of maltreatment experienced in sport, Willson et al. (2021) reported that 66.6% of current and 76.1% of retired athletes had experienced at least one form of neglect (Willson et al., 2021). Of all forms of harms—physical, psychological, sexual, and neglect—the highest proportion of athletes (68.8%) reportedly experienced neglect. The most commonly experienced behaviours of neglect as reported by the current and retired athletes were unequal treatment, training while injured or exhausted, followed by neglect of career and/or educational needs, and being generally ignored. Athletes who identified as female reported significantly higher rates of neglect than

their male counterparts. Coaches, followed by high performance directors, sport administrators, peers, and trainers, were the most frequently identified actor of neglectful behaviours. The recent CASES (Hartill et al., 2021) study of interpersonal violence in children's organised sport across six European countries revealed a prevalence rate of 35% with coaches reported as the most common perpetrator.

Returning to the Case of Marisa

In the case of Marisa, the behaviours of her coaches may be considered as forms of neglect—physical and emotional neglect. By failing to adhere to the medical advice to refrain from weighing Marisa to address her eating disorder, the coaches engaged in physical neglect. Assuming Marisa faced emotional challenges associated with her eating disorder, particularly with respect to her body image, the ongoing comments about Marisa's body and weight, despite medical advice to the contrary, may constitute emotional neglect.

Conclusion

Neglect, an act of omission that reflects a lack of reasonable care, is the most common form of child maltreatment (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013) outside of sport. Despite this, a paucity of research in sport has addressed experiences of neglect and their effects on athletes. Similar to research outside of sport, neglect has been the least researched of all forms of maltreatment in sport contexts (Stirling, 2009). Of the few studies in sport that have included considerations of neglect, findings revealed that athletes report experiences of neglect far more frequently than either physical or sexual harms. Examples of reported experiences of neglect include unequal treatment and a lack of attention to injury, exhaustion, and academic needs. Clearly, the nature and scope of experiences of neglect in sport remain an important area for further research.

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Sexual Violence in Children's Sport

Devin, a 16-year-old athlete, has been working with the same coach, Robin, for the past year. They get along well, enjoy training together, combining hard work and fun. Robin is well-liked by all the athletes as well as the parents, having strong interpersonal skills, and a friendly way of developing relationships with athletes and parents alike. The team has many social events, some are sport-related such as parties at Robin's house after a successful competition and others are non-sport related such as summer barbeques or watching a movie together. Robin often uses social media to communicate with the athletes about training-related matters such as a change of practice time or plan. Lately, Devin has been receiving social media messages from Robin asking how school is going and what Devin's weekend plans are. Devin interprets these messages as friendly and as a sign that Robin cares about Devin's life outside of sport. Robin tells Devin that they are special, and they should keep their communications to themselves so the other athletes on the team don't get jealous or feel Robin is giving attention unequally. Robin compliments Devin's work ethic in training, and their physical appearance, noting that training has really increased Devin's lean body mass making Devin "look great". Subsequently, Robin messaged Devin that they "look sexy", and inquired about whether Devin is dating and has had sex yet. Over time, Robin and Devin's communication becomes about sexual relationships and Robin sends Devin pictures of them shirtless and asked Devin to do the same. Both shared semi-nude pictures of themselves including in sexualised positions. Devin doesn't share the social media communications with anyone—not their parents or their teammates. In training, they try to act as if nothing outside of training is going on between them, but both look for opportunities to touch one another. Robin's coaching involves touch of the athletes for instructional guidance but with Devin, the touching lingers. Robin texts Devin suggesting they get together so they can talk more than they can over social media. Devin agrees, lies to their parents about where they are going, and meets Robin in a nearby park. They go for a walk, talk about all kinds of things, and the walk ends with Robin kissing Devin. Devin feels awkward but really likes Robin, likes the special attention, and doesn't know what to say about feeling uncomfortable. Over time, they spend more and more time together outside of training and the sexual contact advances into sexual intercourse. One day, Devin leaves their laptop open on the kitchen counter with their social media account open and Devin's mother sees the communications between Devin and Robin. Horrified, Devin's mother goes immediately to the police who begin an investigation. As the investigation advances, more young athletes came forward about their experiences of sexual violence with Robin. In the process of investigation, it was discovered that a complaint had been filed with the sport organisation and the police in another city 10 years earlier. In that case, the athlete who allegedly experienced sexual violence withdrew from the process and, as a result, the case did not proceed. When questioned, the leaders of the sport organisation reported that they knew of allegations of sexual misconduct, including the former legal case, but because there had not been a conviction, they allowed Robin to continue coaching.

Introduction

Of all forms of gender-based violence in sport, sexual violence has received the most scholarly and public attention. A plethora of high-profile media cases around the world leave no question that sexual violence is experienced by athletes of all

ages, abilities, sexual orientations, and racial diversity. No sport, sport type, or level is immune from cases of sexual violence. Further, these cases highlight the secrecy associated with sexual violence, a secrecy that is maintained by the perpetrator and survivor, bystanders, and enablers, and too often, the sport organisation itself.

Despite the substantial body of research highlighting the occurrence of sexual violence in sport, the circumstances that enable, perpetuate, and sustain sexual violence in sport, the scope of the problem is difficult to ascertain. It is well-known that cases of sexual violence in sport and non-sport contexts are under-reported (Bjornseth & Szabo, 2018; Brackenridge, 1997; Ehrlich, 2002; Pilgrim, 2018). Additionally, the various ways in which sexual violence is defined and assessed across studies makes it very difficult to compare findings, and to define the scope of the problem.

Defining Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is an umbrella term used to describe numerous contact and non-contact sexual acts. The World Health Organization (2017) defined sexual violence as:

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis, other body part or object, attempted rape, unwanted sexual touching and other non-contact forms.

As an encompassing term, sexual violence is inclusive of the range of experiences that may be sexually violent, from verbal comments to assault. Similarly, coercion can encompass varying degrees of force, from social pressures, psychological intimidation, blackmail or threats of harm or other negative repercussions.

According to Statistics Canada and the Criminal Code of Canada, sexual violence is categorised as a violent criminal offence ranging from unwanted sexual touching to violent, non-consensual intercourse (Rotenberg, 2017). Further, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) outline four characteristics of sexual violence: (1) lack of consent, (2) whether the act was completed or attempted, (3) type of force (i.e., physical or non-physical), and (4) the type of sexual activity, ranging from noncontact sexual harassment to penetration (Basile & Saltzman, 2002). Sexual violence can occur in person, online, or through technology, such as posting or sharing sexual pictures of someone without their consent, or non-consensual sexting (Sanderson & Weathers, 2020). More recently, as our understanding of gender diversity grows, definitions of sexual violence have been revised to include gender identity and expression as seen with the following:

Sexual violence means any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity or gender expression, whether the act is physical or

psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person's consent. It includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, non-consensual condom removing (stealthing), and sexual exploitation.

(University of Ottawa, n.d., para. 1)

Prevalence Outside of Sport

According to the CDC (2022), more than 1 in 3 women experience sexual violence involving physical contact during their lifetimes. Between 20–25% of women in the U.S. experience some form of sexual assault by their senior year of college (Fisher et al., 2000; Krebs et al., 2009). In Canada, in one year alone, it was estimated that there were more than 600,000 incidents of sexual violence (Conroy & Cotter, 2017); given the rise in awareness of sexual violence, and the encouragement of reporting such violence, the numbers are inevitably higher today. In 87% of the cases reported, victims knew their assailant as a casual acquaintance, family member, or intimate partner (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). Sexual assault is recognised as the crime most under-reported to police (Conroy & Cotter, 2017; Perreault, 2015) and less than half of police reported sexual assaults result in charges being laid (Rotenberg, 2017).

Over the last decade, increasing attention has been devoted to the issue of sexual violence in the workplace (McDonald, 2012), the military (Hillman, 2009), and on university and college campuses (Fisher et al., 2000; Krebs et al., 2009; Senn et al., 2014; Sinha, 2013). Sexual violence is commonly understood as a serious public health problem that has a profound impact on lifelong health, opportunity, and well-being (Maniglio, 2009; Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013). Sexual violence impacts every community and affects people of all genders, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, races, (dis)abilities, and ages.

Sexual Violence in Sport

In the sport literature, several definitions and models for understanding sexual violence have been proposed. As shown by Lang et al. (2021), the sport literature is challenged by the use of different terminology which makes comparisons between studies challenging. Terms used by researchers include sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual abuse, sexual harms, and sexual assaults. Definitions vary in terms of breadth, whether they include contact and non-contact behaviours, whether they apply to children, adults, or both, and whether there are qualitative differences in nature or severity of the violence.

Brackenridge (2001) proposed a continuum model, ranging from discrimination to harassment to abuse to describe sexual violence. Sexual discrimination refers to unfair or inequitable working conditions such as hiring policies and funding. Sexual harassment is described as unwanted sexually oriented comments or threats. Sexual abuse consists of coercion, force, or manipulation. Brackenridge's work was foundational to the study of various forms of gender-based violence in

sport and her work still informs current lines of inquiries. One of the difficulties of the continuum-based model, however, is the distinction between the various forms of sexual violence. Questions generated by this model include: When does sexual harassment become sexual abuse, and do sexual harassment and abuse differ in nature or severity? These are particularly important questions for practitioners who need to be specific about policy definitions of prohibited conduct.

Similarly, the IOC Consensus Statement (Mountjoy et al., 2016) defines sexual abuse as “any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given” (p. 1021). This same document also defines sexual harassment as “any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical” (p. 1021). Again, questions about the distinction between sexual abuse and harassment arise. Does an ongoing pattern of unwanted verbal sexual comments constitute sexual abuse or harassment? This distinction may not matter materially to some but for those who need to apply policies, these distinctions become important.

Alternatively, rather than focusing on the behaviours, Stirling (2009) proposed definitions based upon the relationship in which the behaviour occurred. Stirling defined sexual abuse as occurring in a critical relationship such as that between a parent and child or between a coach and athlete, where the athlete depends upon the adult in a position of power for a sense of trust, security, and need fulfillment. Much of the sexual violence literature limits the use of the term sexual abuse to relationships involving children, although Stirling's model advocates for this term in relationships that involve adult athletes when relationships of dependency exist. According to Stirling (2009), sexual harassment occurs with both child and adult athletes when the behaviours occur within non-critical or non-dependent relationships.

A recently proposed framework of child maltreatment in sport (Fortier et al., 2020) categorised sexual maltreatment of children as “any activity that involves engaging a child in sexual activity” (p. 6). It is not clear whether this framework includes behaviours that are not intended to engage a child in sexual activity, such as sexual remarks; it also has a limited application to children.

Recognizing that sexual violence is under-reported in sport and non-sport contexts, narrow definitions of sexual violence exacerbate the problem of underreporting as individuals may feel as though their experiences are not serious enough to report (DeKeseredy, 2000; Wilinsky & McCabe, 2021). Narrow definitions also run the risk of establishing a hierarchy of sexual violence based on seriousness or severity. On the other hand, broad definitions generate higher and probably more accurate estimates of the prevalence of sexual violence (DeKeseredy, 2000).

Prevalence in Sport

Given the different ways in which sexual violence in sport is conceptualised and measured and the various populations of study, ascertaining prevalence rates has been challenging; reported rates range from 2–49% (Fasting, 2015). Reporting rates are also influenced by unsafe reporting mechanisms and fears of repercussions.

Kirby and Greaves' (1996) survey of Canadian high-performance and recently retired athletes revealed that 21.8% had engaged in sexual relations with their coach. Similarly, in an investigation involving 253 student-athletes and 275 coaches, 2% of the athletes had experienced sexual relations in sport, while 3% of coaches admitted to being intimate with athletes under the age of 18 (Nielsen, 2001). The majority of coaches in this study reported it was acceptable to engage in a sexual relationship with an athlete provided the athlete was above the age of 18 years and both parties consented to the relationship (Nielsen, 2001). A study involving NCAA female athletes, demonstrated that over 18% of the athletes had experienced inappropriate comments or sexist jokes from their coach, and 2% reported verbal or physical sexual advances from their coach (Volkwein et al., 1997).

Alexander et al. (2011) conducted a three-year study of adults who retrospectively recalled sport experiences as children. Using an online survey and subsequent telephone interviews, findings revealed that 29% of all respondents to the survey reported some experience of sexual violence with more experiences reported by women. Most of the reported behaviours took the form of what was referred to as sexually harassing behaviours with male teammates making comments about female teammates in mixed sports. The respondents cited normalisation of these behaviours despite the distress caused and reported that coaches and other adults failed to address these behaviours effectively. Peers and teammates were the most commonly reported perpetrators of sexual violence and 21% cited coach involvement. The findings of this study should be interpreted with caution given the low response rate.

In Vertommen et al.'s (2016) survey of over 4,000 Flemish and Dutch adults (up to the age of 50) who had participated in organised sport before the age of 18 years, 14% reported experiences of sexual violence. These authors also included a severity measure, finding that acts of sexual violence by coaches were rated as significantly more severe than those committed by peer athletes.

Survey findings from competitive athletes in Germany indicated that in 63% of cases of sexual violence with body contact, coaches and other staff members were responsible, whereas acts without body contact were most often committed by other athletes (Allroggen et al., 2016). Similarly, coaches were most frequently cited (78%) as the perpetrator in a large-scale qualitative research study across seven European countries (Rulofs et al., 2019). Similarly, Nielsen (2004) reported that 8% of Danish children in sport under the age of 18 years reported engaging in an intimate relationship with a coach before they reached 18. However, only 0.2% of these respondents reported they had experienced sexual abuse, thus highlighting the discrepancy between the legal definition of sexual abuse and children's perceptions of the behaviours that constituted sexual abuse.

The 2020 U.S. Safe Sport Climate Survey included responses of 3,959 adult athletes (including 151 Olympians/Paralympians and 56 medalists) from more than 50 sports. Amongst the key findings, 48% of athletes were reportedly aware of coaches developing sexual relationships with athletes; 93% of individuals who experienced sexual harassment or unwanted sexual contact did not submit a

formal report/complaint; 18.1% of individuals who had unwanted sexual experiences also indicated they were retaliated against; more than half of athlete participants who indicated having unwanted sexual experiences said that some or all of those experiences happened when they were under 18; and 9% of athlete participants experienced inappropriate sexual contact during their sports involvement (U.S. Center for Safe Sport, 2021).

A 2019 analysis by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation indicated that at least 222 coaches involved in amateur sports in Canada were convicted of sexual offences in the previous 20 years, involving more than 600 victims under the age of 18 years (Ward & Strashin, 2019). Cases involving another 34 accused coaches were before the courts at that time (Ward & Strashin, 2019). A prevalence study conducted in Canada with 995 current and retired national team athletes revealed through an anonymous survey that 19% of current athletes and 21% of retired athletes had experienced at least one form of sexually harmful behaviour (Willson et al., 2021). The most commonly reported behaviours included experiencing sexist jokes and remarks, intrusive sexual glances, sexually explicit communication, and sexually inappropriate touching. Female athletes reported significantly more sexually harmful behaviours than their male counterparts.

Despite the predominant focus on the coach-athlete relationship and thus sexual violence committed by coaches, more recent work has highlighted peers and teammates as common perpetrators of sexual abuse and harassment in sport with prevalence rates ranging from 27%–62% (Alexander et al., 2011; Fasting et al., 2003; Gündüz et al., 2007; Hartill et al., 2021; Vertommen et al., 2017). Fasting et al. (2003) reported that 37% of sexual violence experiences among elite female athletes in Norway involved male peers in sport compared with 28% involving coaches. Similarly, most of the sexually harmful behaviours reported by Canadian National Team athletes (Willson et al., 2021) were enacted by peers/teammates, closely followed by coaches. Sexual violence between athletes has more typically been researched within the context of hazing and sexual hazing practices. Such experiences include nudity, forced sexual interactions, and simulating sexual acts (Finkel, 2002; Campo et al., 2005; Johnson, 2002). Both contact and non-contact sexual violence against children in organized sport in Hartill et al.'s (2021) study was perpetrated by known peer athletes primarily. To date, a paucity of research exists on sexualised experiences between athletes beyond those experienced as a part of team orientation rituals.

A common finding across studies that included males and females was that female athletes, whether adults or children, were more likely to report experiencing sexual violence than males. In addition, studies that included athletes from across the performance spectrum showed that elite athletes are at higher risk of experiencing sexual violence than athletes at lower performance levels. Only a few of the existing studies to date have disaggregated the data results by social identity. Women athletes have consistently reported significantly more experiences of sexual violence than their male counterparts (Ohlert et al., 2021; U.S. Center for Safe Sport, 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2021). Those athletes identifying as members of the LGBTQ2I+ community have also reported more

experiences of sexual violence (Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2021) as have those with a disability, those who identify as an ethnic minority, and those of immigrant status (Vertommen et al., 2016).

Most of the research on sexual violence in sport has been conducted with sport participants in the Global North. Recent work has begun to address sexual violence in sport in the Global South although most of this work has focused on sport as a means to address gender-based violence. For example, Hayhurst (2013) reported on benefits sport participation may offer women in the Global South in terms of preventing experiences of gender-based violence. Similarly, Barchi et al. (2022) explored whether women's participation in a women-only soccer league in Kenya was associated with decreases in sexual, physical, and/or emotional interpersonal violence. The findings revealed that 17% of women experienced emotional violence, 10% of women experienced physical violence, 7% of women experienced sexual violence, and 22% reported experiencing any form of violence. However, those women who participated in the soccer league had lower odds of experiencing interpersonal violence over the previous year compared with women who did not participate, leading the authors to conclude that women's sport participation may be a potential strategy to reduce or prevent interpersonal violence.

Other studies have highlighted the experiences of gender-based violence that women in the Global South experience when they participate in sport (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019). These findings highlight the significance of structural and cultural influences, and the importance of further research on gender-based violence in sport in the Global South. Rhind and colleagues (2015, p. 5) identify a challenge in addressing child protection in sport globally as standardised approaches to child protection in sport and approaches for sport for development and peace typically clash with "culturally specific norms relating to childhood, youth, sexuality, and sexual abuse, and also organisational cultures and capacities, all of which can foster resistance".

Strategies Used to Perpetrate Sexual Violence in Sport

A substantial body of literature exists on factors that enable the occurrence of sexual violence in sport, including characteristics of the athlete and perpetrator, situational influences including access to children, the establishment of close and trusting relationships, opportunities to isolate the athlete, and the grooming process (Wilinsky & McCabe, 2021). However, some recent and novel findings suggest new directions for the study and practice of sexual violence prevention and intervention. In an interesting study of coaches' modus operandi or "Behaviors prior to, during, and following sexual abuse" (Kaufman et al., 1998, p. 350), St-Pierre et al. (2022) sought to identify the strategies and stages of sexual abuse perpetrated by coaches against their athletes. Using more than 2,000 Canadian court judgment and media reports, the strategies of 120 coaches who had committed sexual abuse of 321 athletes under their care were examined. Many of

their findings were consistent with what is known about the grooming process, including: targeting a potential victim by deliberately selecting a vulnerable athlete such as one with mental health issues or a disability; enacting behaviours to make the athlete feel special, exchanging sexual content with the athlete, complimenting the athlete's performance, and establishing a romantic relationship or making a declaration of love; establishing emotional closeness with the athlete and befriending them by discussing personal matters, giving gifts, and spending time together outside of training environments (Lanning, 2018). Novel findings included that in one-quarter of cases, the sport organisations were formally or informally made aware of the abuse but did not report to authorities. The sample in St-Pierre's study also used more aggressive strategies to enact sexual violence including providing alcohol or drugs to lower the athlete's inhibitions or taking advantage of them while they were sleeping. These findings emphasise that not all coaches perpetrate sexual violence against their athletes through more typical grooming processes. Another novel finding of this study is that some sexual perpetration occurred in the presence of others rather than the more typically understood situation of being alone and isolated. In fact, individuals witnessed the abuse in 22% of the cases and, in 11.7% of cases, at least one other person participated in the abuse. To engage more than one person in the sexual acts simultaneously, games such as strip poker or fellatio contests were used, or athletes were called upon to perform sexual acts on teammates. According to the authors, the overt nature of these acts led athletes to see themselves as willing participants.

Sexual Violence Through the Policing of Women's Bodies

The topic of sexual violence in sport would be incomplete without addressing the long history of policing women's bodies in sport. Organised sports police girls' and women's bodies through sex verification processes and implementation of dress codes. In the 1960s, female athletes were required to undress and parade before physicians who would confirm that their bodies were indeed "female". Today, sex testing and confirmation of women athletes is conducted through chromosomal and endocrine testing. Violence is enacted against certain women through coercion into invasive and unnecessary medical interventions as a condition to compete (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Not only do these practices violate fundamental rights to privacy and dignity but there has never been comparable practices or regulations used with men. Women from the Global South have been disproportionately affected, thus highlighting the intersections between race and sexual violence.

The World Athletics' regulations of 2011 equated higher than typical testosterone in women with doping, thus constituting a form of cheating. By framing natural physiology as doping, sport organisations had an avenue for testing any woman deemed suspicious (Human Rights Watch, 2020; Pikramenou, 2020). In 2019, the Court of Arbitration for Sport upheld the regulations targeting a subset of women

with variations of their sex characteristics and naturally occurring elevated testosterone levels. At the time, the World Medical Association (2019) recommended that physicians around the world should not observe the regulations as they violate medical ethics.

To ensure femininity and slenderness, muscular sporting bodies that do not fit these characteristics have been viewed as masculine and deviant. The body-related sexual and psychological violence endured by Serena Williams is but one of many examples; when she wore a full bodysuit at the French Open in 2018, she was sanctioned with a fine (Ramaswamy, 2018). Prior to the 2012 London Olympics, the Badminton World Federation banned women from wearing shorts and track pants, instead requiring them to wear skirts and dresses. The Federation acknowledged that commercialising femininity and female bodies would increase sponsorship and viewership (JER & #201; Longman, 2011). The contradiction between men's and women's attire in beach volleyball and handball is a poignant example of the policing and sexualising of women's bodies. Despite being able to perform in the sport with shorts, as worn by the men, the women are required to wear bikini bottoms with restrictions on the size of the bikini bottom (Hincks, 2021). At the 2021 Summer Olympics in Toyko, the Norwegian women's beach handball team protested their dress requirements and wore shorts instead. Although the athletes were initially fined, the International Federation eventually changed the rules around attire (Gross, 2021). Similar debates about the sexualising of women athletes' bodies through dress code are currently occurring in other sports.

Returning to the Case of Devin

As illustrated in this case, the coach, Robin used the well-understood grooming process to prepare Devin for the perpetration and acceptance of sexual violence. Key elements of the grooming process included: establishing positive relationships with the athlete and parents, devoting special attention to a select athlete, gradually violating boundaries of the relationship to discuss personal matters outside of sport, engage in sexting, and spending time alone outside of the sport context. Although Devin felt uncomfortable with the initial boundary violations, the case highlights the well-documented developmental limitations of young people in identifying behaviours as abusive and speaking up against the abuse to the perpetrator or others in their social network. Regrettably, the case also highlights the far too common finding that sport organisations knew or suspected the perpetrator was engaging in sexually inappropriate or violent behaviours but failed to act to prevent or intervene.

Conclusion

Of all forms of violence in sport, sexual violence has received the most public and scholarly attention. The related literature is hampered by a lack of consistent terminology, conceptualisation, and operationalisation of sexual violence, making

comparisons between study findings difficult. Prevalence rates vary widely but, in the end, no child should experience sexual violence in any context, including in sport. The majority of the research on sexual violence has been focused on the coach-athlete relationship despite the Nassar case which highlights the possibilities of others in the sport ecosystem enacting harms, and despite emerging research showing incidents of sexual violence between peers and teammates. The process of grooming athletes to experience sexual violence has been well-documented and supported by research and case examples. New findings suggest that more attention should be devoted to non-grooming methods of perpetrating sexual violence and methods of enlisting observers and several participants simultaneously in sexually violent acts. Recent research and high-profile international cases of sexual violence experienced by athletes highlight the complicity of those in sport organisations to prevent and intervene; as a result, understanding barriers and facilitators to addressing sexual violence by sport leaders is recommended for a future direction. Additionally, to address gender-based violence in sport, the ongoing policing of women's bodies through sex testing and dress codes must be addressed.

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Physical Violence in Children's Sport

As a young, talented diver, Mireille was achieving national and international attention as an up-and-comer in the diving world. She has an exceptional mastery of her body in space, long lines, and the ability to rotate quickly. She was strong and agile but needed work on her flexibility. Her ability to fold in half into a tighter pike position in the air was limited by her flexibility. To improve this, Mireille would sit on the floor with straight legs together in front of her body; she would lean forward from the hip aiming to lay her chest on her legs. To assist her in getting her chest closer to her thighs, her coach would sit on her back for minutes at a time. Mireille hated this exercise given the pain and discomfort caused but she did her best to stay quiet as she knew with greater flexibility, she would get better scores. As an important competition approached, and her flexibility didn't seem to be improving, her coach pushed harder on her back and held the position for longer. Mireille was in a great deal of pain and started to cry. Her coach called her a baby for crying and pushed harder. Mireille finally asked her coach to stop because her back was really hurting. Her coach refused. Mireille became more assertive and louder, telling her coach to stop. Again, her coach refused. She yelled for him to stop. Finally, Mireille let out a shrill that drew the attention of everyone in the training space. Mireille had suffered a herniated disc in her lower back and would be out of training for an extended period. As a result of this experience, Mireille felt victimised, not having her opinion about her own body heard; she also lost trust in her coach's desire and willingness to care for her health and well-being.

Definition of Physical Violence

According to the World Health Organization (1999, p. 16), physical violence results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of an interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. In the child maltreatment literature, physical abuse is defined as the infliction of physical harm on an individual by a caregiver and may include contact and/or non-contact physically abusive behaviours (Perry et al., 2002). The emphasis in both definitions on a parent/caregiver or person in a position of power raises questions about the inclusion of physical bullying behaviours that are known to occur between peers. However, Miller-Perrin and Perrin (2013) define child physical abuse as:

The intentional use of physical force against a child that results in or has the potential to result in physical injury. Behaviors that could be defined as abusive include hitting a child with one's fist or an object such as a belt; kicking, biting, choking, shaking or burning a child; throwing or knocking down a child; or threatening a child with a weapon.

(p. 58)

This definition is not restricted to the acts of a parent/caregiver or person in a position of trust, thus opening the possibilities of physical violence between peers.

Prevalence Outside of Sport

In a 2001 Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (Trocmé et al., 2001), the authors reported that 31% of cases investigated by child welfare services involved physical abuse as the primary reason for the investigation. Physical harm involved bruises, cuts, and scrapes and in the majority of cases were caused by the parent. Stoltenborgh and colleagues (2015) compared the results of a series of meta-analyses on the prevalence of child sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and physical and emotional neglect, to assess the prevalence of child maltreatment across the globe. The overall estimated prevalence rates for self-report studies (mainly assessing maltreatment during childhood) were 226/1,000 or 23% for physical abuse.

Physical Violence in Sport

Despite the substantial body of research on physical abuse experienced by children in the home, a paucity of work has explored children and young people's experiences of physical abuse in sport (David, 2005; Fenton & Pitter, 2010). Relative to the attention devoted to emotional and sexual abuse in sport, the study of physical abuse had been relatively overlooked, which is perplexing given the physicality of sport and focus on the body.

In the context of sport, physical abuse has been defined as the use of physical force causing injury (Grange & Kerr, 2010; Pinheiro et al., 2014; Tjønnndal, 2016). With a focus on child athletes, Alexander et al. (2011) characterised physical abuse as: (i) Acts of physical assault inflicted on the child athlete by adults or peers; (ii) forced overtraining leading to risk of injury; and (iii) child athletes being forced or encouraged to train while injured or exhausted. Others (e.g., Stirling, 2009) have characterised physical abuse by either contact forms such as punching, kicking, and shoving or non-contact forms such as forced or mandated age- or physically-inappropriate training loads, and training when injured or in pain. David (2005) proposed four types of physical abuse which young athletes may be exposed to: (1) excessive intensive training; (2) violence due to participating in competitions; (3) peer violence; and (4) physical violence by adults. To date, the main focus of research on physical violence in sport has been on harm to young people perpetrated by coaches.

More recently, Fortier and colleagues (2020) have criticised the commonly used conceptualisations of physical violence in sport, claiming that many behaviours frequently referred to as physical abuse or physical maltreatment more accurately represent psychological maltreatment. According to these authors, inclusion of behaviours that do not involve physical contact and that emphasise actual or

potential physical harm, such as administration of excessive exercise as punishment or pressures to continue training despite injury or exhaustion, are instead examples of psychological maltreatment. Given the difficulties in identifying whether the consequences of an action will be physical or psychological, the authors advocate for definitions of physical violence that are restricted to the physical nature of the act rather than the consequences of actions. Stemming from this conceptualisation, they propose that physical maltreatment includes the following acts: (i) to shake, push, catch, or throw a child athlete; (ii) to strike an athlete with a hand; (iii) to punch or kick a child athlete; (iv) to hit an athlete with a hard object, and; (v) to choke, strangle, poison, burn, or stab a child athlete. The authors highlight that this conceptualisation of physical violence in sport is aligned with that used extensively in the general child abuse literature.

Prevalence of Physical Violence in Sport

Of existing prevalence studies, estimates of physical violence range from 3 to 40% depending upon the definition used. Variations in prevalence may also be attributed to inclusion of frequency indicators; for example, some studies assess the occurrence of one incident of physical violence while others assess physically violent experiences on a repeated basis. Studies also vary as a function of inclusion of severity indicators, with some studies assessing mild versus severe incidents.

In Alexander and colleagues' (2011) study, a convenience sample of 6,124 young people (age 18–22 years) completed an online survey examining their experiences of participating in sport as children. The findings indicated that 24% of respondents reported at least one behaviour of physical harm. The most commonly reported physically harmful behaviours included being forced to continue to train when injured or exhausted with the likelihood of experiencing these behaviours increasing as the level of competition increased. The most commonly reported forms of aggressive treatment experienced were being shoved (40%) or being physically knocked down (28%). Of respondents reporting physical harm, 17% had experienced violent treatment with 5% experiencing this treatment regularly in their main sport. Being hit with a fist (9%) and being hit with an implement (9%) were the most commonly reported violent behaviours in the survey.

In an Australian study (McPherson et al., 2017) using survey data from 107 athletes between the ages of 18 and 25 years, being forced to train or play when injured or exhausted was reportedly the most common form of physical harm with 34.4% indicating this experience occurred on one or two occasions and 12.9% indicating that this was a regular occurrence. Following being forced to train or play when injured or exhausted, the next most frequently experienced type of physical abuse was being “shoved, thrown, or shaken” (12.9%) and being knocked down or having had something thrown at them (10%).

In Vertommen et al.'s 2016 prevalence study of 4,043 adult respondents (18–50 years of age) who had been engaged in organised sport as a child (up

to 18 years of age), 11% retrospectively recalled experiencing at least one event involving physical violence. These researchers also included a severity measure with results indicating that 8% of respondents reported incidents characterised by severe physical violence (e.g., you were hit with an object). Male respondents reported significantly more incidents of physical violence than female respondents. Rates of physical violence were also significantly higher for those respondents who were immigrant, LGB and those who self-identified as bisexual (27.5%), and with a disability (32.4%).

In a more recent study of interpersonal violence (Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2020) of 1,055 athletes between 14 and 17 years of age from Quebec, Canada, 39.9% reported at least one experience of physical violence. Being older, identifying as a boy, non-heterosexual sexual preference, and a member of a team sport, were related to higher odds of reporting physical violence.

In the U.S. Safe Sport Climate Survey (U.S. Center for Safe Sport, 2021), 21.7% of the Olympic and Paralympic athlete respondents indicated being physically harmed in their sport experiences. Black, Multiracial, and Asian athletes were more likely to experience physical harm than White athletes. Rates of physical harm experienced by those who indicated that they were bisexual were almost double when compared to any other sexual orientation. The most frequently reported forms of physical violence in descending order were: being punished with excessive exercise, having an object thrown at you, being threatened with physical harm, denied water, and being physically hit.

In Willson et al.'s (2021) prevalence study of 995 Canadian National Team athletes, 14% reported at least one experience of physical harm and 3.4% reported experiencing physical harm on a repeated basis. Excessive exercise as punishment was the most frequently cited experience.

A recent study (Hartill et al., 2021) examined the prevalence of forms of interpersonal violence across six European countries [Austria, Belgium (Brussels-Wallonia), Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Romania, Spain, and the U.K.]. The sample included 10,302 individuals, aged 18–30 years who had participated in sport during childhood. In the context of sport participation, 44% of respondents reported at least one experience of physical violence before the age of 18 years compared to 37% of respondents who had at least one experience of physical violence outside sport. In the sport context, *Instructed or forced to play while injured or at a harmful intensity* (18%), and *physical assaults (punched, slapped, grabbed/pushed, or otherwise)* (15%) were the most common experiences of physical violence. More men (52%) than women (36%) reported at least one experience of physical violence inside sport before age 18, a finding common across all countries. The authors also reported that the prevalence of physical violence is greater at higher levels of sport; of those who had experienced physical violence, 57% were international level athletes compared to 35% of recreational level respondents. The athlete respondents reported being encouraged by adults in sport to continue to train despite injury, sickness, or exhaustion.

Actors of Physical Violence

The data regarding actors responsible for physical violence is equivocal. In some of the prevalence studies, the coach was the most frequently cited instigator/perpetrator of physical violence (McPherson et al., 2017; Willson et al., 2021). In McPherson et al.'s (2017) study of Australian sport participants, 66% of respondents who experienced physical harm reported the coach was responsible for the harm. In addition to coaches, Willson et al. (2021) reported that trainers and high-performance directors were identified perpetrators of physical harm more frequently than were peers. However, in other prevalence studies, peers were found to be most commonly responsible for physical violence (Stafford et al., 2013; Vertommen et al., 2016). In fact, Vertommen et al. (2016) found that peers were the perpetrator in 57% of all cases of physical violence. In Stafford et al.'s (2013) study of U.K. sport participants, the majority of respondents (62%) reported teammates or peers as the actors of physical harm, but this changed as athletes advanced competitively with 37% of respondents at the highest level of competition reporting coaches or trainers as actors of harm. The perpetrators of physical harm also varied by sport with coaches or trainers cited more often in dance, swimming, and athletics. In the Alexander et al.'s study (2011), 62% of those reporting some form of physical harm in their main sport, claimed their teammates or peers were responsible and 37% cited a coach or trainer was involved. As the level of competition increased, coaches were more commonly cited as the actor of harm.

Influencing Factors

The use of physical violence varies across time and across cultural contexts. Historically in Western countries, it was not uncommon for school teachers to use physical violence to punish children and to assure compliance and obedience; today, these practices are prohibited (Durrant et al., 2009). Similarly, while parents traditionally spanked their children for poor behaviour, today, this behaviour violates normative practices in many cultures and is a criminal act in some countries. However, what some consider physical violence is still used in some cultures and contexts. For example, Human Rights Watch (2020) recently released a report on the use of physical violence with child athletes in Japan. Traditionally, physical violence was seen as essential to building a strong personal character and to achieving excellence in sport. Although the use of physical violence with children is prohibited by law in Japan, these laws have not permeated sport and there are no clear mechanisms for ensuring compliance (p. 2). Using surveys and interviews, Human Rights Watch reported that of 381 respondents, 24 years of age and younger, 19% reported they had been hit, punched, slapped, kicked, knocked to the ground, or beaten with an object while participating in sports; 22% reported being forced to train when injured, or being punished with excessive training; 6% reported having their hair cut or shaved as punishment, often for a minor

infraction, like being late to practice. As one athlete reported, “*I was hit so many times I can’t count*” (Human Rights Watch, 2020). These experiences occurred across various sports and regions. The findings indicated that coaches were most often the perpetrator of physical violence, followed by an older teammate. The hierarchy on sport teams between older and younger players accounted for the use of physical violence by older teammates.

Several researchers have proposed that elite training regimes that are not built around the physical developmental needs and limitations of children and instead are excessive and lead to overuse injuries are a form of physical violence (David, 2005). McPherson and colleagues (2017) reported that child athletes expressed concerns about overtraining and training through injury and a common state of exhaustion resulting from their training regimes. Stafford and colleagues (2013) also write about children being inculcated over time into a culture and sport ethic where they come to accept discomfort, injury, and exhaustion as normal training. Similarly, Hartill and colleagues (2021) refer to the value and prestige adults in sport grant to child athletes who are willing to overload their bodies, ignore pain, and play through pain, injury, and exhaustion. Rather than being viewed as developmentally inappropriate, unhealthy, or problematic, such behaviours are viewed as being badges of honour and athletes who display these behaviours are viewed as mentally tough, driven, and passionate. The sport ethic, hegemonic masculinity, the prioritisation of performance outcomes, and hyper-masculinist culture all contribute to the use and normalisation of physical violence in sport (e.g., David, 2005; Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Hartill, 2014; Hartill et al., 2021).

Returning to the Case of Mireille

The experience of Mireille meets the criteria of the definition of physical violence as the intentional use of physical force was applied to a child and resulted in or had the potential to result in physical injury. Her coach intended to apply physical force to her back to increase flexibility. Despite several attempts to have him stop the behaviour, her coach ignored her calls, even when she demonstrated distress by crying and yelling for him to stop. The coach clearly demonstrated physical and psychological control by continuing with his actions despite repeated calls for him to stop and even though it was her body the coach was controlling. A physical injury resulted but, even if it hadn’t, the coach’s behaviour would arguably constitute physical violence as his actions had the potential to cause harm or injury. One may surmise that the coach’s behaviour was influenced by the interests in performance outcomes in the upcoming competition, a desire to control, and an assumption that he knew better than she did what her body could or should be able to handle.

Conclusion

Curiously, despite the physicality of sport and the emphasis on the body, few researchers have examined physical violence in sport. Although existing studies

indicate that physical violence may not be reported with the same prevalence rates as psychological and sexual violence (and sometimes neglect), it remains a common experience. Depending upon the definition and methods used, as well as the sample, anywhere between 3 and 40% of athletes report experiences of physical violence. Across various studies, the most common forms of physical violence include being administered excessive exercise (usually as punishment), being forced to train despite injury, pain, or exhaustion, and being physically struck. Currently, there is a lack of consensus about the definition of physical violence and whether, as Parent and Vaillancourt-Morel (2020) suggest, physical violence should be limited to the physical nature of behaviours rather than the consequences of actions; this perspective would mean that some of the commonly reported forms of physical violence, including exercise as punishment and training through injury, pain, and exhaustion are more appropriately positioned as psychological violence. More clarity with respect to definitions and operationalisation would benefit research in the field. Also, more attention needs to be devoted to cross-cultural differences in the use and effects of physical violence.

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The Effects of Gender-Based Violence

Introduction

Gender-based violence in sport has received such attention by the public and scholars alike because violence towards children runs contrary to our assumptions of what it means to be a child. Violence towards children also violates moral and scientific norms of children's care and development, and thus intuitively is assumed to have negative consequences. Given the general acceptance that early life experiences influence later development, a life course developmental perspective is valuable for understanding how conditions in childhood affect individuals throughout their lives. Although the study of the effects of violence in children in sport is in its infancy, a wealth of research exists outside of sport. This research highlights the short- and long-term effects associated with children's experiences of violence, including the ways in which the effects of violence have imprinting effects on biological functions, especially during sensitive developmental periods (Shonkoff et al., 2009). Further, the existing research evidence points to both cumulative as well as differential effects of various forms of violence.

Effects of Violence in Children

Much of the scholarly work on the effects of maltreatment and violence on children is found in the study of adverse childhood experiences (ACE). Adverse

Sophia, a two-time Olympian in an aesthetic sport, had been retired from sport for 5 years. She had transitioned out of sport into university studies which she was really enjoying. She had made new friends outside of sport and was glad to be out of the all-encompassing training regime. However, Sophia continued to suffer from a negative body image and disordered eating patterns that she developed as an athlete and that plagued her throughout her entire career. Every time she reached for a sweet or a carbohydrate, she could hear her coach's voice in her head telling her not to eat that—that it would make her fat. Even 5 years out of the sport she relives being weighed in front of her teammates and being publicly shamed for gaining even the smallest amount of weight. When she looks in the mirror, she's reminded of her coach telling her thighs looked like tree trunks. To this day, she gets anxious about gaining any weight and wears baggy clothes despite being an extra-small size in clothing. Unfortunately, her boyfriend doesn't help matters as he too reminds her to eat carefully so she doesn't put on weight. He pressures Sophia to look exactly as she did when she was competing even though she was no longer devoting 6 hours per day in training.

childhood experiences are defined as “potentially traumatic events that can have negative lasting effects on health and well-being. This includes maltreatment and abuse as well as living in an environment that is harmful to their development” (Boullier & Blair, 2018, p. 132).

There is a plethora of research indicating that children who are exposed to sexual, emotional, physical abuse, or neglect, as well as other adverse conditions, are more likely to experience several short- and long-term detrimental effects. Adverse childhood experiences place children and youth at increased risk of cognitive deficits, academic difficulties, antisocial behaviour, behavioural problems, maladaptive perceptions of the self, underdeveloped problem-solving and communication skills, and mental health disorders, including depression, social anxiety disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder (English et al., 2005; Jaffee & Maikovich-Fong, 2011; Macfie et al., 2001; Symons et al., 2017). Additionally, children who were chronically maltreated expressed increased levels of aggression, decreased ability of using coping skills (English et al., 2005), and higher rates of juvenile reoffending (Stewart et al., 2008). Further, there are far-reaching economic and social consequences associated with ACEs in terms of lost employment productivity and increased reliance on social services (Monnat & Chandler, 2015). The adverse effects of violence endured by children often persist into adulthood (Arnow, 2004) as susceptibility to poor health outcomes such as chronic diseases, premature mortality, and depressive disorders is greater than for those children who have not experienced such adverse experiences (Arata et al., 2005).

In addition to the general trend of a negative trajectory of health and development in children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences, each form of violence has been associated with differential outcomes. For example, Miller-Perrin and Perrin (2013) reported that children who have experienced neglect often display social and interpersonal difficulties such as poor parent-child attachment patterns and negative peer interactions. Children who experience neglect desperately seek attention and in seeking this often do so in inappropriate ways that result in further rejection from others. Experiences of neglect have been associated with low academic engagement and achievement, as well as deficits in language comprehension and verbal abilities. Emotional and behavioural problems have been documented including low self-esteem, ineffective coping, inappropriate emotional responses including increased emotional reactivity and aggression. Long-term consequences of early life experiences of neglect include cognitive deficits, alcoholism, and psychiatric disorders. Neglect is a strong predictor of social isolation, loneliness, and negative self-esteem (Spertus et al., 2003).

Experiences of psychological violence are particularly damaging to one’s sense of self and self-esteem. Youth victims of psychological violence reportedly “feel worthless, damaged, unloved, unwanted, or endangered” (Hornor, 2011, p. 436). The influences of psychological violence on a child’s sense of self also manifest in interpersonal difficulties; poor emotional regulation skills are associated with inappropriate expressions of various emotions and difficulties in developing

interpersonal relationships (Hornor, 2011; Spertus et al., 2003). Subsequent developmental trajectories for children who experience psychological violence include a greater likelihood of later psychological difficulties including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and suicide ideation, even more so than children who have experienced physical or sexual violence (Hornor, 2011; Mullen et al., 1996). Taken together, research indicates that the effects of psychological violence both in the short and long term can be just as, if not more, serious than the effects of physical and sexual abuse (Burns et al., 2010; Kent & Waller, 2000; Mullen et al., 1996; Spertus et al., 2003; van Harmelen et al., 2010).

Researchers have shown that early life experiences of physical violence, including physical punishments are associated with a sense of worthlessness (Arata et al., 2005). In a study of college students, past physical violence victimisation was associated with poor self-worth, and an increased rate of suicide and self-harming behaviours. Physical violence has also been associated with acting out behaviours including delinquency and inappropriate expressions of anger.

A substantial body of research exists on the developmental correlates of childhood experiences of sexual violence. For example, the links between childhood sexual experiences and later substance use has been well documented, showing that youth with histories of abuse engaged in significantly greater substance use than their non-abused peers (Harrison et al., 1997; Rotherman-Borus et al., 1996). Further, sexual abuse alone was associated with higher substance abuse than physical abuse alone. When a representative New Zealand birth cohort ($N = 1,265$) was followed throughout development and assessed on a wide range of mental health, social, and family factors (Fergusson et al., 2008), the effects of childhood sexual abuse were somewhat stronger and more consistent than those for childhood physical abuse. Early childhood experiences of sexual violence have also been associated with later outcomes such as mental health difficulties and sexual promiscuity, especially amongst girls.

One of the difficulties in associating the differential effects of adverse experiences in childhood with later health and development is the co-occurrence of various forms of violence. As Felitti (2009) reports, the majority of people who are exposed to one category of adverse childhood experience are also exposed to at least one other. "Therefore, researchers trying to understand the long-term health implications of childhood abuse may benefit from considering a wide range of related adverse childhood exposures" (Felitti, 2009, p. 251). Psychological violence is perhaps the most poignant example as it can be a stand-alone form of violence but is embedded in every other form of violence. In other words, sexual and physical violence and neglect inherently include psychological violence and messages about oneself and worthiness. Researchers have provided strong evidence for the co-occurrence of various forms of violence; as such, when a child experiences one form of violence they are likely to experience others, an experience known as polyvictimisation. Studies of comorbid abuse indicate that experiencing multiple types of maltreatment led to greater maladjustment than experiencing

one type of maltreatment (Higgins & McCabe, 2001). Similarly, Fox and Gilbert (1994) found that experiencing two or more types of childhood trauma was correlated with increased symptoms of depression.

Taken together, the psychological and biomolecular research supports the conclusion that exposure to chronic stress, including experiences of violence during childhood, changes the development of immune, endocrine, and nervous systems (Hughes et al., 2017). The weakening of one's immune system helps to understand the associations between adverse childhood experiences and later negative health outcomes such as obesity and diabetes. Changes to the endocrine and nervous systems are such that early childhood experiences of adversity create inappropriate stress responses which not only have physical health correlates but also contribute to emotional dysregulation, cognitive impairments, and poor interpersonal interactions. Experiences of multiple adverse childhood experiences are strongest for problematic alcohol and drug use and interpersonal and self-directed violence (Hughes et al., 2017, p. e363).

Importantly, some effects of adverse childhood experiences do not manifest during childhood or adolescence or even closely following the experience. Instead, effects often emerge later in life, at critical developmental periods, triggered by experiences that are associated with early experience of violence such as romantic relationships, sexual advances, intimate partner violence, and becoming a parent (Briere, 1992; Trickett et al., 2011), a phenomenon Briere (1992) referred to as a sleeper effect. Researchers have also found that negative outcomes later in life can manifest even when the experienced violence is not appraised negatively or as abuse by the survivors at the time of occurrence (Senn et al., 2001).

Effects of Violence in Sport

Despite the vast body of literature on the effects of adverse childhood experiences in the child development and child maltreatment literature, the study of the effects of childhood experiences of violence in sport is in its infancy.

Vertommen and colleagues (2018) explored the relationships between experiences of interpersonal violence in sport and adult well-being using assessments of depression, anxiety and somatisation, and quality of life. While controlling for demographics, recent life events and relatives' psychological problems, the authors reported that childhood experiences of severe sexual, physical, and psychological interpersonal violence were associated with increased psychological distress and reduced quality of life. Experiencing multiple forms of interpersonal violence was linked most strongly with more adult psychological distress and reduced quality of life.

A recent study was conducted by Parent et al. (2021) of 1,055 Canadian athletes in the province of Quebec between the ages of 14 and 17 years who completed online scales of interpersonal violence, self-esteem, psychological distress, and PTSD symptoms. The findings indicated that psychological violence, neglect, and sexual violence were independently related to lower self-esteem. Physical,

psychological/neglect and sexual violence were independently related to higher psychological distress and PTSD symptoms. Additionally, the perpetrator of violence had differential effects as violence from an athlete or a parent was independently related to lower self-esteem and violence from an athlete, a coach, or a parent was independently related to higher psychological distress and PTSD symptoms.

In their study of German elite athletes, Ohlert et al. (2019) reported that athletes who had experienced sexual violence reported more depression and lower levels of well-being. Interestingly, the experience of sexual violence in the sport context was associated with more negative outcomes than were experiences of sexual violence outside the sport context, presumably because of the close and trusting relationships formed in sport and the subsequent violations of this trust in sexual violence.

Experiences of sexual harassment and abuse in sport are consistently associated with lower self-esteem, increases in anxiety, depression, and eating disorders, and a negative impact on athletic performance (Fasting et al., 2002). In many cases, athletes have left sport as a result of experiences of sexual harm (Fasting et al., 2002). In their study of correlates of childhood sexual abuse in athletes, Leahy et al. (2011) reported that childhood sexual, physical, and psychological abuse were strongly correlated. Reported childhood sexual abuse and psychological abuse were uniquely correlated with posttraumatic and dissociative symptomatology in the male sample. The unique correlate in the female sample was childhood physical abuse. Sex disaggregated analyses suggest that the social context of childhood sexual abuse may be qualitatively different for men and women.

The reported consequences of psychological violence in sport are similar to those reported in the child maltreatment and adverse childhood experiences literature. Psychological violence within the coach-athlete relationship has reportedly threatened the psychological well-being of elite athletes (Gervis & Dunn, 2004), caused emotional distress (Stirling & Kerr, 2008) and a lack of self-worth and confidence. As one retired female athlete reported in response to questions about the long-term influences of experiences of psychological violence in sport:

Sometimes it feels hard for me to discover a new place or meet new people . . . My confidence has been so affected all these years because I was being told that I couldn't do stuff. It's something I have to deal with every day, you know to do something that scares me or overcome these little fears and gradually build my confidence back.

(Kerr et al., 2020, p. 85)

In a study of 14 elite athletes, including both males and females, Stirling and Kerr (2013) explored the perceived effects of emotional abuse in the coach-athlete relationship. All participants reportedly experienced some form of emotional abuse and perceived their experiences to have impacts on their psychological well-being, as well as their training and performance. Psychological effects reflected

athletes' feelings of anxiety, low self-esteem, anger, decreased self-efficacy, and low mood (Stirling & Kerr, 2013). Training effects encompassed athletes' feelings of reduced enjoyment, decreased motivation, impaired focus, and difficulty with skill acquisition (Stirling & Kerr, 2013). Yabe et al. (2019) also reported a loss of motivation in association with experiences of psychological violence. Some athletes were motivated in response to emotionally harmful behaviours, with desires to increase training efforts and regain the coach's approval; however, most athletes felt their performance was hindered because of the psychological harms they endured.

Similarly, an athlete in Poucher's et al.'s (in press) study of athlete mental health explained:

All my coaches . . . if you go and do something wrong, they're going to make you feel terrible and scream at you and yell at you and make you feel like an absolute worthless human. Having coaches like that really made it difficult to stay mentally healthy.

Experiences of psychological violence in sport has also been associated with interpersonal difficulties in romantic or dating relationships, a finding that is well-documented in the child abuse literature (Wekerle et al., 2009). As Lindsey reflected on her first intimate relationship outside of sport, she reflects on the similarities between her treatment in sport and her treatment in her relationship:

My first ever real relationship . . . was a terrible disaster and it just was because it became an extremely emotionally abusive dynamic. It was almost like that was the environment that I was familiar with and so I just kind of fell into it because that was the environment of my relationships. You know, it's just when you've been treated a certain way for so long that's just what you're used to and that's what you think you deserve.

(Kerr et al., 2020, p. 85)

Important connections have been uncovered regarding the relationship between perceptions of psychological violence and athletic performance. Some participants in Stirling and Kerr (2007) noted that if they believed they had performed well, then the abuse was perceived positively, also implying some justification of the abuse. In contrast, when athletes performed poorly or stopped improving, the emotional abuse was perceived as more harmful, including negatively affecting the athletes' mental health and triggering eating disorders. These performance effects could be due to internalisation of the abuse, or it could also be that emotional abuse decreased the athletes' performance (Stirling & Kerr, 2007).

Researchers have explored the longer-term implications of experiencing psychological violence in the form of body shaming including negative verbal comments about the body, body monitoring such as public weigh-ins or posting of

weights, or prescribing diets and removing food from an athlete's plate (Willson & Kerr, 2021). The effects of body shaming are highlighted by the following quote:

No one ever told me in the outside world that I was fat but in the gymnastics world I was told that all the time . . . it does create a scar for the rest of your life . . . you constantly have a warped perception of yourself and that's not something that will ever change.

(Stirling & Kerr, 2013)

Another female athlete who, after experiencing emotional abuse and body shaming at an international competition, said: "I remember trying to make myself puke after one dinner because I was so scared, I ate too much. It was one of the first times I had really felt like vomiting after dinner was a solution" (Willson & Kerr, 2021, p. 11).

In a study of eight retired female athletes from aesthetic sports who had experienced emotionally abusive coaching practices, including body shaming, the findings indicated that these athletes experienced psychological distress long after they had retired from sport (Kerr et al., 2020). Many of the responses shared by these athletes resembled symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) including intrusive nightmares, avoidance of speaking about and interacting with those associated with their former sport experiences, and somatic reactions to recalling their sport experiences. The findings indicated that the repercussions of experiences of psychological violence in sport were felt long after the athletes left the sport context. Further, all the athletes required professional psychological support to address and recover from their experiences of emotional abuse. Several previous studies on child abuse outside of sport have revealed that of all forms of maltreatment, emotional abuse is the strongest predictor of PTSD (Burns et al., 2010; Wekerle et al., 2009).

In a study of the reported effects of emotional abuse, one elite, female athlete described her suicide ideation: "And that's [when on the National Team] about the time I had really, really, hard ideas, like if I took my own life right now, like, who would notice, you know? It had gotten really bad" (Kerr et al., 2020; p. 84). McMahon and McGannon (2019) also explored abuse in sport and self-harming behaviours and found that following abusive experiences, athletes engaged in high-risk and self-harming behaviours such as eating disorders, substance use, and risky sexual behaviours as ways to exert control over their lives and cope with the harms experienced.

Returning to the Case of Sophia

Sophia shows enduring effects post-retirement of the psychological violence she experienced as an athlete. Her experiences of psychological violence were in the form of body shaming, including negative comments about her weight and body,

public weighings, and criticisms. She continued to have a negative body image, anxiety about gaining weight, and disordered eating patterns. Even 5 years post-retirement, Sophia recalls negative experiences and relives harmful interactions with her coach. In addition, she had engaged in a romantic relationship in which previously experienced patterns of body shaming experienced in sport are repeated outside of sport.

Conclusion

Despite the vast body of literature outside of sport demonstrating the long-term developmental impacts of adverse childhood experiences, research on the effects of violence in sport is in its infancy. The general findings from both bodies of literature indicate that all forms of violence can have detrimental effects on one's sense of self and sense of worthiness, interpersonal relationships, academic performance, and health outcomes later in life. These findings hold true even if the experience is not appraised as being violent or abusive at the time. Further, the health and developmental outcomes of such experiences may not manifest until later in life. Although each form of violence may have independent effects, the experience of one form of violence is typically associated with the experience of others; further, polyvictimisation is associated with more serious outcomes.

Although there is an impression amongst sport stakeholders that sexual violence is the most egregious form of violence, the literature both within and outside of sport does not support this assumption. Particular attention should be devoted to all forms of violence in the interests of optimising athlete health and well-being both during the sport career and afterwards. The findings pertaining to the potential negative health and developmental outcomes of experiences of psychological violence are particularly poignant for those in sport, given that psychological violence is the most frequent form of violence in sport, and is normalised as an athlete development strategy.

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Part III

Why Does Gender-Based Violence Occur? How Is It Sustained and Silenced?



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Addressing Cultural Norms of Sport

Introduction

The study of gender-based violence (GBV) in sport began with a focus on individual risk factors or vulnerabilities of athletes and characteristics of perpetrators of sexual violence, particularly violence against girls and women athletes by their male coaches. This early work acknowledged the influence of masculine values and roots of sport. Over time, this early focus expanded to include other forms of violence, violence experienced by boys and men, and more recently, violence experienced by athletes from equity-denied groups (Hartill, 2014; Gurgis et al., 2022). Attention has also expanded to consider the influences of relationships and systems beyond the athlete and the perpetrator. Today, violence in sport is well recognised as a systemic issue reflecting the intersecting effects of individual, interpersonal, organisational, and societal influences (David, 2005; Kerr et al., 2019).

Maleika had a dream of making the Olympic Team and according to experts in the sport, she had what it takes to get there. In addition to exceptional natural talent and drive, she had the best coach in the sport and supportive parents. Her coach, someone who had a long history of producing world-class athletes, thought he had struck gold when he found Maleika. Her passion for the sport, her drive and a “never give up” attitude, was a gift to this coach who saw her Olympic potential. Together, they trained before and after Maleika’s school hours, and on weekends, and over time, Maleika gave up other interests, friends at school, and family vacations to pursue her training. Maleika was hungry for training even through pain and injury. Given her coach’s stature in the sport, he was able to access additional training times in the facility, top-quality equipment, and funding to travel to numerous high-profile competitions. He also attracted media attention to promote Maleika’s athletic success and his reputation as a successful coach. In time, Maleika started to develop an overuse injury that interfered with her training and despite rest and accessing reputable therapists, her injury kept recurring. Maleika tried her best to push through the pain and inhibited movements. Her coach kept pushing her in training with the Olympic Games in sight and rewarded Maleika for working through the pain, praising her for her mental toughness and determination. But, as her injury continued to hold her back, Maleika and her coach became more and more frustrated and discouraged; she became more tearful and emotionally fragile in training and her coach became more aggressive with demands, threats, and criticisms. The Olympics were fast approaching and both Maleika and her coach were feeling the pressure. Maleika wondered if it was time for her to take a complete break from training to heal but she trusted her coach’s expertise and experience and wanted to please him. She kept pushing through the pain until she suffered a career-ending injury that inhibited her mobility long after her sport career ended. Her Olympic dream was lost.

Influences on violence in sport have been conceptualized in various ways including as risk or vulnerability factors. For example, Brackenridge (2001) conceptualised the risk factors for sexual exploitation into the categories of normative and constitutive risks. Normative risks refer to characteristics of the culture, such as the autocratic authority system, the close personal contacts between coaches and athletes, the power imbalance between athlete and coach, isolation of athletes, and sexualised idiocultural traditions (e.g., hazing rituals). Constitutive risk factors refer to characteristics of the organisational structure including hierarchies, rewards based on performance and compliance, rules and procedures that limit or restrict consultation and athlete input, and legitimisation of touch.

Roberts et al. (2020) recently synthesised the factors contributing to systemic violence in sport through the categories of: structural factors (i.e., power imbalance, winner-take-all rewards, isolation); social factors (i.e., conformity to dominant values, perceived instrumental effects, organisational tolerance); and organisational stressors (i.e., role conflict and ambiguity, depersonalisation, intensification, deficient internal communication, professional uncertainty).

Given the developmental emphasis of this book, the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) will be used to address causes of GBV in sport, the conditions that enable it to persist, and the difficulties associated with preventing and intervening in GBV. This theory has been used extensively in child development, psychology, and sport research to explain how the individual develops within a complex system of relationships and influences, from the interpersonal to the societal (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). In this chapter, influences at the microlevel or individual level, the mesolevel or interpersonal level, and the exosystem or sport context will be addressed. In the subsequent two chapters, other aspects of the sport context, including policies and the autonomy of sport, will be reviewed.

Microlevel: Individual Level

The innermost level of the ecological model is the microsystem which consists of the characteristics of the individual and the activities and interactions in the person's immediate environment. For children, the microsystem includes the child's personality, physical attributes, and capabilities, and relationships with parents, siblings, daycare staff, or teachers. For young athletes, the microsystem includes the more immediate influences on the athlete's development and thus includes relationships the athlete has with the coach and parent.

Among the significant relationships the young athlete has with authority figures, most public and scholarly attention has been focused on the power of the coach and the ways this power can be misused (Burke, 2001). Coaches are often viewed as "gods" or "parent figures" to young athletes and as gatekeepers to athletic success by athletes and parents alike (Brackenridge, 2001; Kerr & Stirling, 2012). Coaches are granted formal or legitimate power by virtue of their leadership position in sport, and this power enables them to command compliance with rules and practices. Coaches also have reward and coercion power or the abilities to

apply rewards and punishments to others, respectively. By virtue of their expertise, specialised knowledge, and access to resources, coaches have informational and resource power (French & Raven, 1959; Roberts et al., 2020). A significant power imbalance between a coach and their athlete is broadly recognised. At the elite level, this imbalance may be exacerbated by the fact that athletes may spend time alone with the coach while training and travelling to competitions, often spending more time with their coach than they do with their parents. For many, the coach-child athlete relationship is recognised as a critical relationship in which the child athlete depends upon the coach for a sense of safety, security, trust, and fulfillment of needs, much like the parent-child relationship (Stirling, 2009). The sport literature is replete with criticisms of ways this power imbalance is too often unquestioned and left unchecked (David, 2005; Tomlinson & Strachan, 1996).

However, it's important to remember that power may be used in both constructive and destructive ways (Krahn, 2020; Parent & Fortier, 2018; Smits et al., 2017). When power is used constructively, nurturing relationships may develop between the coach and athlete in which athletes' development as athletes and as people are enhanced in ways that reflect developmentally appropriate practices and adherence to athletes' rights. In such relationships, professional boundaries are respected, with coaches' influences restricted to guiding athletic development in partnership with the athlete, in developmentally appropriate ways. Holistic health and well-being, achievement of developmental tasks and milestones, supportive relationships, and enjoyment of the sport experience are some examples of outcomes from the constructive use of power. The large body of research on democratic, athlete-centred, and autonomy-supportive coaching focuses on the possibilities offered to athletes, coaches, and others when power is used constructively (Kidman, 2010; Light & Harvey, 2017; Pill, 2018).

When used in destructive ways, violence may result. Coaches' positions of power may be used to engage in harmful practices towards athletes, such as sexual, physical, and psychological abuse, without fear of consequences (Pinheiro et al., 2014; Smits et al., 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2009; Roberts et al., 2020; Wilinsky & McCabe, 2020). These positions of power enable coaches to influence the sport environment itself by isolating athletes from support networks and thus avoiding detection (Parent & Fortier, 2018; Roberts et al., 2020). In addition to the fact that athletes need their coaches and the resources they provide to realise their athletic dreams, negative repercussions associated with athletes' disclosures of their harmful experiences to others are often made apparent by coaches who perpetrate harms (Roberts et al., 2020).

The early work on GBV in sport focused on sexual abuse, and specifically, the sexual abuse of girl and women athletes by male coaches. To understand how such abuse could occur in sport, significant attention was devoted to understanding individual risk factors of athletes and those who perpetrate sexual abuse, including pedophiles. Stemming from Finkelhor's work on sexual abuse outside of sport, Brackenridge and others identified risk factors of athletes who experienced sexual exploitation in sport including being female, younger, having lower self-esteem,

and weak relationships with their parents. Individual risk factors of perpetrators of sexual abuse included being male, older, with strong interpersonal skills that they use to gain the trust of adults, including parents of the young athletes (Brackenridge, 2001).

It's easy to see the connections between assumptions about the causes of violence and approaches to prevention and intervention. With a focus on individual, socially deviant perpetrators, it followed that prevention and intervention efforts were initially devoted to ridding the sport system of the "bad apples". Early efforts to safeguard athletes addressed background checks and screening tools (Gibbons & Campbell, 2002). While these measures continue to be implemented in many sport organisations today and are important preventative measures, they are limited in their effectiveness. For example, in many jurisdictions, background and screening tools identify only those who have been criminally convicted and do not identify actors of the much more commonly experienced psychological violence in sport. Further, as many sport organisations lack professional human resource personnel and instead are run by volunteer parent boards, sport leaders who engage in problematic behaviour are often released from their contracts without further repercussions, thus leaving them free to move to another club or jurisdiction to cause further harms (Lilienthal & Mowrey, 2006).

As the lens on GBV in sport expanded to include such harms as psychological abuse and neglect, the language of perpetrator persisted despite the differences in the nature and causes of these harms. More specifically, non-sexual harms have less to do with individual characteristics of the person instigating the acts than they do with cultural norms within sport and assumptions of athlete development. At the time of this writing, athletes from around the globe are speaking up about toxic sport cultures (Star Editorial Board, 2022; Whyte, 2022) in which they train, referring to cultures characterised by degradation, threats, humiliation and shaming, all of which are examples of psychological violence. Although the athletes' campaigns to raise awareness of their experiences of violence tend to point to the problematic behaviours of those in positions of power such as sport coaches and CEOs of sport organisations, these leaders are, in fact, part of a broader system that enables and even encourages violence towards athletes. As such, a focus on violence within the relationships of coach or other sport leaders and athlete, while important, places emphasis on the victim-perpetrator model of maltreatment and does not account for harmful policies, the absence of protective policies (Reading et al., 2009), or embedded harmful practices within the institution of sport.

Early work on abuse in sport focused on the vulnerabilities of athletes who function in a position of lesser power, thus suggesting a passivity to harms; however, more contemporary work identified vulnerability as socially constructed by power hierarchies and structural inequalities that oppress certain groups (Butler, 2004; Hilhorst & Bankoff, 2004), including athletes (Sartore-Baldwin et al. (2017). Researchers (e.g., Rogers et al., 2012) have proposed a taxonomy of vulnerability that contributes to our understanding of the positions athletes find themselves in within the sport system. Inherent vulnerability refers to basic needs that

vary according to age, gender, developmental period, and ability that reflect our dependency on others for physical, social, and psychological needs. Situational vulnerability refers to context-specific vulnerability that is influenced by membership within specific social groups (Rogers et al., 2012). In sport, situational vulnerability may exist for athletes by virtue of the power ascribed to sport leaders such as coaches, managers, and support staff. Pathogenic vulnerability occurs as a result of oppressive social structures (Rogers et al., 2012) characterised by relationships and situations in which oppression, injustices, or violence exist. These types of vulnerabilities are interconnected as seen with the lack of action taken by sport organisations in response to allegations of athlete maltreatment, which serves to further perpetuate abuses and silence athletes (Stafford et al., 2015; Stirling & Kerr, 2014).

Several authors have suggested that prevention and intervention initiatives have had limited impact, in part because of the focus on individual level factors; instead, broader considerations of organisational or ecosystem influences are needed (Nite & Nauright, 2020; Roberts et al., 2020). As Brackenridge and Rhind (2014, p. 333) wrote, the individual level focus on “getting the right people in sport” (individual approach) needs to shift to “‘getting sport right’ (a systems approach)”.

Mesosystem: Interpersonal Level

The mesosystem encompasses connections between microsystems. For example, a child’s performance in school is influenced by the relationship with the teacher and activities in the classroom as well as parental involvement in learning, and provision of adequate sleep and nutrition. In sport, the mesosystem includes relationships among key stakeholders in sport, such as coaches, administrators, parents, and support personnel, and the ways these relationships influence the young athletes.

In the elite sport environment, a coach’s power often extends to influence over the parents, who may be socialised into the sport context to accept the power of the coach and the view that “the coach knows best” (Knight & Harwood, 2009; Kerr & Stirling, 2012). Stemming from this socialisation into the power structures of elite sport, parents of elite child athletes may relinquish control and responsibility for their child’s best interests to the coach, deferring to the decisions of the coach, thus limiting their abilities to recognise or intervene in harmful practices. Parents may also learn that when they question or criticise coaching practices, their child pays a price. Repercussions for the child not only limit parents’ inclinations to speak up but they also limit athletes’ willingness to share their negative experiences with their parents (McPhee & Dowden, 2018). The isolation permitted in sport is also a contributor to power imbalances as sport training is often a closed environment, in which outsiders, including parents, are prohibited from observing. Training, therapy sessions, and travel to games and competitions present many opportunities for young athletes to be alone with authority figures

without monitoring or parental involvement. The Nassar case in U.S. Gymnastics is an example of the abuses that can take place when athletes are left alone with trusted authority figures in sport (Udowitch, 2020).

The power and unquestioned authority of the coach may extend to sport administrators as well. As Jacobs et al. (2017) reported, directors of sport clubs trusted the coach based upon their expertise, and thus normalized problematic conduct. At the local or community level of sport, organisations are often guided by volunteer parent boards of directors, thus presenting conflicts of interests. At higher levels of sport, paid administrators may find themselves in similar conflicts of interest as their job security too often depends upon the performance of the athletes and teams, which in turn, is dependent upon the coach.

Exosystem: The Sport Context

The exosystem refers to social settings outside of the individual but that influence the individual. For example, flexible work schedules, childcare centres, playgrounds, and maternity/paternity leaves influence the development of the child. In youth sport, normative values, practices, and policies significantly influence the welfare of athletes. Related to athlete welfare, practices such as background screening, and reference checks are important, as are codes of conduct, onboarding processes, education and professional development, duty to report obligations, and the provision of confidential and arms-length complaint processes. Additionally, cultural norms such as hegemonic masculinity, the sport ethic, views of violence as an effective tool, and an over-emphasis on performance, are important contributors to gender-based violence in children's sport. These contributors will be addressed in this chapter.

Cultural Norms

To protect athletes from violence, the cultural norms that permeate sport must be addressed, including hegemonic masculinity, the sport ethic, views of violence as serving instrumental purposes, and the prioritisation of performance outcomes.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Historically, sport has been described as a “maker of men”, exclusive to men for the purposes of promoting physical and character development (Pike, 2015), and masculine virtues of independence, discipline, aggression, and courage (Bonde, 2009; Wellard, 2002). Organised sport in Western society was created for and by traditionally White, middle-upper class, and heterosexual men. These historical narratives of masculinity constitute cultural pressures for boys and men to behave in certain ways: to be masculine means being physically and psychologically tough, competitive, aggressive, and violent; to avoid the sharing of emotions, and; to

engage in risky and sexist behaviours. These narratives also classify men as able-bodied, and heterosexual (Anderson, 2005; Messner, 1992). Coined hegemonic masculinity, this form of masculinity legitimises unequal gender relations between men and women, between masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities (Messerschmidt, 2019).

Despite societal changes over the years, ranging from advancements in gender equity, recognition and inclusion of sexual diversity, reconciliation efforts with Indigenous peoples, the #MeToo and the Black Lives Matter movements, hegemonic masculinities have been resistant to change (Vescio & Schermerhorn, 2021). Hegemonic masculinity continues to permeate organised sport in Western societies and perpetuate unequal distributions of power. The implications of these unequal power distributions can be seen with various forms of violence, including sexual and psychological abuse, homophobic and sexist banter in sport, bullying and hazing, and discriminatory practices (Diamond et al., 2016; Greey, 2021; Pappas et al., 2004).

The Sport Ethic

The sport ethic refers to a view that self-sacrifice, unyielding dedication and commitment to the game, taking risks, challenging limits, and winning are necessary for athletic performance (Hughes & Coakley, 1991). The sport ethic serves as a rationale for the use of violent practices in sport as well as the acceptance of such practices as normal, acceptable, and even necessary. According to Coakley (2009), the sport ethic promotes a culture of risk in which athletes under-report pain and injuries and return to play prematurely and in which coaches may also ignore athletes' pain and injury and encourage play despite injury (Douglas & Carless, 2006; Miller & Hoffman, 2009). In fact, those who compete through pain and injury tend to be glorified and praised by coaches and other stakeholders in the sport context (Fournier et al., 2021). This culture of risk extends to psychological violence in which athletes accept psychological violence and coaches are excused from behaving in psychologically abusive ways in the name of performance (David, 2005; Kerr et al., 2020b; Stirling & Kerr, 2007, 2009). Fournier et al. (2021) examined the relationship between psychological violence by coaches and conformity to the sport ethic and found that those athletes who conformed to the view that limits should not be respected or accepted experienced less psychological violence. Dominant values of the sport ethic also include uncritical acceptance and unquestioned commitment to the experts with reputations of prior demonstrated success (Nite & Nauright, 2020; Stirling & Kerr, 2009). This deference to those in positions of authority with expertise makes it easier for those in these positions to misuse their power to enact violence without resistance or intervention (Roberts et al., 2020). Taken together, many instances of violence are unreported due to sport's structural and cultural processes that operate to perpetuate a culture of inaction (Kerr et al., 2020a).

Instrumental Violence

Research in child development and in sport indicates that violence is used for instrumental purposes, reflecting assumptions that violence is an effective and even necessary tool to achieve outcomes. Evidence exists in parenting literature that abusive conduct such as use of physical punishments, humiliation, and intentional denial of attention are used by parents based on the premise that these acts are “for their [children’s] own good” (Miller, 1980) and are effective in toughening up their children to better prepare them for life’s demands (Bettner & Lew, 2000; Gelles, 1978).

In sport, the use of psychologically violent behaviours is often justified as necessary for the development of the qualities necessary for optimal athlete development and achievement of performance outcomes. This is best seen with the assumptions related to mental toughness. The narrative that athletes need to be mentally tough permeates sport literature, particularly in sport psychology. Although consensus exists that elite youth athletes require persistence and perseverance, frustration tolerance, and psychological resilience to achieve in sport, how these characteristics are encouraged, facilitated, or developed are highly contested (Jacobs et al., 2017; Krahn, 2020; Parent & Fortier, 2018; Roberts et al., 2020). Behaviours such as threatening to abandon an athlete, humiliation, ridicule, and excluding an athlete from training or competition are commonly implemented and normalised by coaches in the pursuit of mental toughness (Owusu-Sekyere & Gervis, 2016; Roberts et al., 2020). The assumptions underlying efforts to make athletes mentally tough are inextricably linked to masculine values and the sport ethic addressed previously. Andersen (2011) proposed that mental toughness resonates with much of what is questionable and problematic in sport, including a “macho, masculine patriarchal and pathogenic culture” (p. 69). Much of the mental toughness literature tends to be a-critical and ignores the possibility that it may serve as a cloak to hide and legitimise violent practices (Andersen, 2011; Kerr & Stirling, 2017).

Coaches have self-reported that they use psychologically abusive practices based upon the belief that they are instrumental and effective for achieving performance success (Roberts et al., 2020; Stirling, 2013). The assumption that violence is instrumental or functional for performance success becomes normative through social learning processes, including modeling behaviours of those who have achieved success. Violence is often rationalised as necessary to achieve athletic success; as such, it is viewed as a legitimate method of increasing motivation, effort and focus, and to invoke punishments in order to deter future failures (Roberts et al., 2020).

Researchers have shown that violence in sport is sustained because athletes and other stakeholders learn to normalise harmful practices as part of sport training and as necessary for career development. For example, violent acts are perpetuated by virtue of fear of repercussions for the athlete’s career even when the misuse of power is recognised as inappropriate or problematic (Jacobs et al., 2017; Kerr & Stirling, 2012). Without interventions, coaches who have used abusive methods,

particularly if they are associated with winning athletes or teams, are more likely to continue to use such methods (Parent & Fortier, 2018; Smits et al., 2017). As Wilinsky and McCabe (2020), note, winning coaches are above reproach.

Performance Outcome Focus

Researchers of youth sport (e.g., David, 2005; Coakley, 2014) have argued that the sport environment has experienced a shift in philosophy away from athlete development towards an emphasis on performance outcomes and specifically the outcomes of excellence and winning. With such a narrow focus, sport practices have become more exclusionary to those who are athletically gifted rather than focused on broad participation to advance the health and well-being of all young people. At more competitive levels of sport, the prioritisation of performance over athlete health and well-being has been identified as a contributor to the occurrence and persistence of gender-based violence (Roberts et al., 2020; Wilinsky & McCabe, 2020) and a barrier to the disclosure and reporting of experiences of violence (Willson et al., 2022). As one elite girl athlete offered, “She was the best technical coach around so I had to tolerate the rest of it [the abuse] . . . I had to be tough and just ‘suck it up’” (Stirling & Kerr, 2009, p. 232). Another elite athlete reported, “As long as people were achieving results, the coaches and high-performance directors could act with absolute immunity” (Willson et al., 2022, p. 7).

Concerns have long existed about the benefits adults glean from children’s sport performances. Sport leaders, including coaches, administrators, agents, and sport science staff, may benefit financially, reputationally, and politically from children’s sport successes. Even parents may lose sight of their children’s healthy development by virtue of the benefits they gain personally. In this way, the child is objectified as a means to success for parents, sport leaders, and organisations (Cameron et al., 2017). As one elite athlete claimed, “I watched an entire generation of athletes between ages 16–27 be purged and kicked off the team since they were not ‘needed’ and there was no value in development based on the funding model” (Willson et al., 2022, p. 7). It is no wonder, given the use of children’s performance to benefit adults that many liken elite children’s sport to child labour (Center for Sport and Human Rights, 2022; Donnelly, 1997).

Coaches’ interactions with child athletes are influenced by the fact that their worth, reputation, and employment security are often determined by win-loss records or podium finishes of their athletes or teams. When coaches experience pressures to perform, they have been known to resort to more psychologically harmful behaviours such as verbal threats (Krahn, 2020). Once a coach’s team or athletes experience winning, a reputation of success develops for the coach which further reinforces the use of harmful coaching practices and the power of the coach (e.g., Smits et al., 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2014; Wilinsky & McCabe, 2020). What works is repeated.

The relationship between a performance outcome or winning focus and violence is also seen with peer-to-peer violence in sport. For example, athletes with

more skill who thus contribute significantly to winning performances experience acceptance and report more positive relational dynamics than athletes who lack skill (Vierimaa & Côté, 2016). Positions of power amongst teammates are held by appointed leaders such as team captains who tend to be more experienced and the most skilled members of the team. Contrastingly, athletes who fail to demonstrate athletic skill or performance excellence are more likely to experience harmful peer interactions, such as being bullied, ridiculed for their performances, and/or ignored by teammates (Battaglia et al., 2018; Kerr et al., 2016; Nery et al., 2020). Non-adherence to expected performance ideals may be associated with psychological violence for team sport athletes, given that their performance impacts others and overall team outcomes (Parent & Fortier, 2018; Shannon, 2013). On the other hand, superior athletic ability may serve as a protective mechanism against bullying (Kerr et al., 2016).

Several authors have highlighted the effects of the performance-focused culture in sport on the occurrence and perpetuation of violence, namely that athlete welfare is relegated to a priority below performance success. For example, Parent and Demers (2011) found that the topic of sexual abuse was a low priority in some Canadian sport organisations because of fears of unfounded allegations and false accusations, a lack of leadership, training, and resources. In their interviews with safeguarding lead officers in the U.K., Hartill and Lang (2014) reported that these welfare officers continued to face resistance or inertia from sport administrators in supporting child protection work. Similarly, Noble and Vermillion (2014) reported that U.S. administrators in youth sport believed child abuse was an important issue in society, but they did not believe it was a problem within their organisations. As a result, educational training about and accountability to existing policies to address suspected abuse were lacking.

Returning to the Case of Maleika

Maleika's story highlights the influence of the sport ethic and the power of the coach. Maleika's coach exemplified several sources of power including legitimate and reputational power through his position, expertise, and previous successes; his access to resources such as high-quality equipment, therapists, and travel to competitions; and the ability to reward and punish as he did throughout her struggles with injury. Maleika deferred to her coach's authority in dealing with the injury even though she had reservations about her own health status. Both Maleika and her coach demonstrated many behaviours that reflect the sport ethic. Maleika was willing to self-sacrifice other interests and activities for her sport dreams and persistently pushed through the pain of injury. Her coach also promoted training despite injury and rewarded her for doing so, praising her mental toughness. Both were highly motivated by the performance outcome of reaching the Olympic Games and may have prioritised that goal over her well-being.

Conclusion

Although initial research on gender-based violence in sport focused on individual characteristics of the perpetrator and survivor, and these characteristics are an essential piece of the puzzle in explaining the occurrence and perpetuation of violence, there are other important contributors. Violence in sport is widely accepted as a systemic problem. Aspects of the culture of sport, including hegemonic masculinity, the sport ethic, the belief that violent acts help to achieve specific outcomes, and the prioritisation of performance outcomes help to explain why gender-based violence occurs, why it is perpetuated, and why experiences are silenced.

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A Look at Failed Sport Policies

Introduction

Outside of the sport context, the importance of organisational missions, mandates, and policies has been highlighted as influencing deference to authority figures, the occurrence of abuse, the willingness to disclose and report abuse (Wolfe et al., 2002), and processes for addressing violations. Related to sport, policies to protect the welfare of athletes, and young athletes specifically, have proliferated recently, including policies regarding age eligibility for sport competition, anti-doping, concussion protocols, abuse and violence prevention. However, these policies have not been without criticisms. Concerns have been expressed about who contributes to policy development, who the policies are for, whether they are transparent, clear, and evaluated. In sport, concerns have also been expressed about the focus on performance outcomes in policy, to the neglect of athlete welfare.

Emphasis on Performance Outcomes Versus Athlete Welfare

It is not uncommon in sport organisations to see missions focused on performance outcomes. For example, the mission of the Canadian organisation Own the

Sean, an elite girl athlete, has been receiving unwelcome sexual messages and images from John, an assistant coach. Sean has asked John repeatedly to stop the sexting, to which John responds that the messages and images are funny and suggests that Sean should lighten up and learn to take a joke. Despite Sean's repeated requests, the coach continued to barrage Sean with sexually explicit messages. Eventually, Sean decided to lodge a formal complaint. A search for an appropriate policy under which to file a complaint led to the discovery that the only relevant policy available to athletes included a complaint process that was directed by the executive head of the organisation. Not only was the assistant coach in question hired by the executive head but they were personal friends having worked together in the past and taken personal trips together. The policy also referred to an investigative process that involved a hearing panel comprised of the executive head of the organisation, the head coach, and a board member. In addition to the conflicts of interests between these individuals, all of them were men. The policy did not stipulate that the hearing panel members should represent gender diversity. Nor did the policy include athlete representation on the hearing panel. Either Sean could submit her complaint knowing that the process would be riddled with conflicts of interest and not independent or confidential or she could decide not to submit a complaint. She was left in an untenable position.

Podium (2022), which provides funding to athletes who are medal hopefuls on the international stage, is “To provide the technical leadership for Canadian sports to achieve sustainable and improved podium performances at the Olympic and Paralympic Games through a values based approach” (para. 2). Similarly, the mission of the Canadian Olympic Committee (2022) is “To lead the achievement of the Canadian Olympic Team’s podium success and to advance the Olympic values in Canada” (para. 5). Despite references to values in these mission statements, the focus on podium performances has come under fire recently as a contributor to toxic sport cultures in which athletes experience several forms of violence (Ewing, 2022). As Brackenridge and Rhind (2014) proposed, explicit policy references to athlete welfare and promotion of athlete rights, including children’s rights, subverts performance outcomes.

Contrastingly, organisations designed to protect young athletes from harms, such as the Child Protection in Sport Unit and the U.S. Center for Safe Sport have missions focused on protection and welfare, without references to key considerations for sport organisations—performance outcomes. With missions and mandates of sport and child protection organisations that do not overlap, it is easy to see how and why athlete welfare has not permeated sport organisations.

Several authors have proposed that child protection policies in sport are designed for and by the organisations. Researchers have revealed that sport organisations’ policies are driven more by a motivation to mitigate the risks to the sport organisation than to a commitment and duty of care to the welfare of young people (Parent & Demers, 2011; Hartill & Lang, 2014; Hartill & O’Gorman, 2015). The view that raising awareness of interpersonal violence will lead to a flood of complaints and malicious or false allegations against those in positions of power in the sport organisation is pervasive (Brackenridge, 2001; Hartill & Lang, 2014; Lang & Hartill, 2015).

Lack of Clarity

Safeguarding policies in sport have been criticised on the grounds that conceptual confusion exists and terms and concepts are often poorly defined and lack operationalisation. Without conceptual and operational clarity, the effectiveness of policies, and prevention and intervention initiatives are hindered (Bekker & Finch, 2016).

The variety of terms used to describe harms to young athletes, including violence, non-accidental violence, gender-based violence, abuse, harassment, maltreatment, safe sport, and safeguarding, contribute to the current conceptual confusion reflected in policies and educational programmes. Although one may look to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to represent international interests in elite sport, their use of the umbrella term, “non-accidental violence” to refer to forms of harassment and abuse is problematic. The term “non-accidental violence” stems from the medical field, originally used to identify physical abuse in children and to separate “intentional violence” from accidents. However, the field

of injury prevention no longer uses the term accident, based on the understanding that outcomes are always preventable and should be considered as such for prevention purposes (Davis & Pless, 2001; Doege, 1999). At a fundamental level, the use of the term “non-accidental violence” raises questions of what constitutes “accidental violence” and whether one (non-accidental) reflects intentional motives while the other (accidental) reflects a lack of intent. In stark contrast, the child maltreatment literature has long promoted the view that intent is irrelevant; without this consideration, parents may be excused from beating their children because they intended to teach the child a lesson, or a coach’s berating behaviours may be tolerated because of their intent to make the athlete more mentally tough. As Ahmed (2019) highlights, the “non-accidental” can simultaneously be useless for preventing some forms of harm that may be positioned as “accidental”, as well as being useful for those (organisations) who seek protection from accusations of violence or those who neglect to prevent that harm when they could and should have.

Policy concerns have also been expressed regarding the lack of clarity with respect to prohibited conduct and what constitutes violence in sport (Howard & England-Kennedy, 2006; Jacobs et al., 2017). Without this clarity, it’s far too easy for behaviours to be perpetuated and normalised despite their harmful effects (Pappas et al., 2004; Rodríguez & Gill, 2011; Stirling & Kerr, 2007). At the same time, clarity regarding prohibited conduct, while necessary, is also insufficient. It’s one thing to convey to sport stakeholders what behaviours will no longer be tolerated, accepted, or normalised but it’s another to educate about expected or acceptable conduct. In other words, while berating and shaming coaching practices may be identified as prohibited conduct, this does not help coaches understand what behaviours they should be using instead.

As sport organisations have scrambled to address athlete maltreatment, some have gravitated to Safe Sport policies while others have used the term safeguarding. A study of sport stakeholders (Gurgis et al., 2022) indicated that many interpreted the term safe sport to refer to the prevention of various harms, from injuries and concussions to sexual and psychological abuse. However, some interpreted safe sport to include but go beyond the prevention of harms to refer to the promotion of optimal, growth-enhancing sport. Additionally, for safety to be assured for all participants, attention to equity, diversity, and inclusion in sport must be integrated into concepts of safe sport and safeguarding, particularly as those from equity-deserving groups have claimed that safe sport does not apply to them (Gurgis et al., 2022). As a Black athlete said,

I feel like I have to prove myself as a human or as a person because I’m at a disadvantage for being Black . . . it’s almost like I need to earn Safe Sport because I’m Black. So once people accept me for my skin colour, then I can feel safe in sport . . . it’s probably the same for Brown people, people in wheelchairs, or gay people too. We’re not easily accepted by others so we need to prove ourselves and once we do, then we can benefit.

(Gurgis et al., 2022)

Lack of Independence

Policies regarding child welfare in sport have been criticised for a lack of independence, thus presenting conflicts of interest and barriers to athletes reporting their experiences. Athletes have made it clear that they are reluctant to report their experiences of violence. Of 995 Canadian National Team athletes, only 44% of current and 48% of retired athletes disclosed or told anyone of their experiences; moreover, only 16% of current and 13% of retired athletes reported or filed a formal complaint of their experience of violence (Willson et al., 2022). When asked why they did not report their experiences, they cited a lack of an independent mechanism through which they could pursue their concerns, leaving them having to report to their sport organisation. This presented conflicts of interest and barriers to reporting as illustrated by athletes' comments: "*Telling NSOs [National Sport Organizations] about a concern means putting them in a position where they have to incriminate themselves*"; "*Expecting NSOs to run their own investigations is wrong. They have too much to lose*" and; "*Asking for help from the people that hired the abusive coach was like committing suicide*" (Willson et al., 2022).

As Bekker and Posbergh (2022) write, the development of policies to protect athletes are not always independent or conflict-free. They cite the example of potential conflicts of interests in the development of the International Olympic Committee Consensus Statement (IOCCS) resulting from a lack of independence, and power imbalances that ironically are precisely those the consensus statement is designed to mitigate. Bekker and Posbergh identify perceived or indirect conflicts because several of the authors of the IOCCS are funded by the IOC or involved in other IOC-related activities, such as medical commissions, National Olympic Committees, International Federations, and consultancy.

Lack of Accountability and Evaluation

Brackenridge, in 2001, raised concerns about the lack of monitoring and evaluation of child protection policies in sport and these concerns persist today. In addition to the absence of ongoing data collection about progress towards goals, the use of data to evaluate whether policies are effective, why or why not, and under which circumstances, is lacking in sport (Coalter, 2015; Lang & Hartill, 2015). As Hartill and O'Gorman (2015, p. 187) write, ". . . it might be argued that the appearance of doing something counts for more than understanding whether that 'thing' in fact makes a (positive) difference—and how much difference, to whom and under what circumstances".

The Ropes and Gray report (McPhee & Dowden, 2018) of the Nassar systemic abuse tragedy, found that existing safeguarding policies lacked implementation measures, transparency and accountability, and thus enabled the occurrence and continuation of harms. In response to the Nassar case, the documentary *Athlete A*, and the global online movement #gymnastalliance that revealed gymnasts' testimonies of abuse, violence, and toxic training cultures, several countries conducted climate or culture reviews in women's gymnastics, including in Australia

(<https://humanrights.gov.au/gymnastics>), New Zealand (www.gymnasticsnz.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Gymnastics-New-Zealand-Independent-Report-10-February-2021.pdf), and the U.K. (www.whytoreview.org). Common criticisms in these reviews include a lack of transparency with respect to policies, a lack of implementation measures, and accountability, all of which were cited as contributing to the occurrence and perpetuation of harms to athletes. These gaps may account, in large part, for the lack of change within the gymnastics culture since Joan Ryan's 1995 book, "Little Girls in Pretty Boxes" which provided a scathing account of the cultures in which elite gymnasts and figure skaters train.

In Canada, Donnelly et al. (2016) conducted a document analysis to examine the extent to which the policies of sport organisations met the safeguarding requirements stipulated by Sport Canada almost 20 years previously. The review of policies of this sample revealed that 86% of national (NSOs) and 71% of provincial sport organisations (PSOs) were in compliance with the mandate to have publicly accessible harassment policies. However, only 14% of the NSOs and 10% of the PSOs were in compliance with the requirement to have trained, arms-length, harassment officers in place; instead, these positions were often held by executive directors or other staff members of the organisations, thus presenting significant conflicts of interest (Donnelly et al., 2016). The fact that the National Sport Organizations must indicate compliance with these stipulations annually to receive their funding highlights the lack of accountability exercised by the funding body, Sport Canada.

Without evaluation, child protection policies and interventions risk not having any impact on child welfare or having unintended negative consequences while serving the needs of the organization (Bekker & Posbergh, 2022). We see this with the "Rule of Two" of the Coaching Association of Canada (www.coach.ca), which stipulates that private one-on-one interactions between a coach and athlete are to be avoided; that any one-on-one interactions between a coach and an athlete must take place within earshot and view of a second coach, with the exception of medical emergencies. Also, one of the coaches must be of the same gender as the athlete. Preventing one-on-one interactions between a coach and athlete is clearly aimed at addressing sexual violence which typically occurs in private settings. However, the Rule of Two will not have any effect on the most commonly experienced forms of harms—psychological violence and neglect—which occur in public with other coaches, parents, athletes, and administrators present. Further, the stipulation about gender implies that sexual violence occurs only between those of opposite sexes, thus perpetrating outdated understandings of sexual violence. Not only is the Rule of Two not research-informed but it has never been evaluated. Important questions remain about whether the adoption of this rule has led to a decline in reports of sexual violence. It is argued that the implementation of this rule has also had unintended negative consequences by further limiting access to sport participation by those young people who do not have any means to get to and from practice without reliance on coaches to provide transportation. One may argue that this rule serves the political goal of responding to a moral

panic around sexual violence in sport or at least being seen as doing something to respond, but this rule may, in practice, have little to no effect or worse, cause further unintentional harms. Without evaluations of policies, sport organisations may feel they have enacted their due diligence by having a policy and continue to operate without accountability (Hartill & O’Gorman, 2015).

Despite the rise of athlete-led advocacy initiatives and calls for change, athletes’ voices are not clearly incorporated or reflected in safe sport policies. For example, no athletes are included in the authorship of the IOCCS and athletes’ voices are not included in the document, despite the intent of the policy to protect athletes from harms. The lack of athletes’ voices is incongruent with the UNCRC that stipulates that children should have input into the decisions that affect them.

Returning to the Case of Sean

As illustrated in this case, Sean did not have access to a policy that ensured access to a safe, independent, and conflict-free complaint mechanism. Without access to a complaint mechanism outside of the sport organisation, Sean was left with no option but to report to the very people who had existing relationships with and inherent interests in protecting the alleged actor of violence. As a result, the policy and processes for addressing her complaint were riddled with conflicts of interests and processes that maintained power amongst sport leaders. In addition to lacking gender diversity on the hearing panel, there also were no athlete representatives to support the athlete’s perspective.

Conclusion

The importance of policies in articulating the values of an organisation, expected conduct, processes for addressing complaints, and consequences for misconduct has been well-documented in sport and non-sport domains. Within sport, policies designed to protect athletes from rights violations including violence have been criticised for a lack of clarity, and lack of independence, monitoring, and evaluation. Athletes have made it clear that they do not report experiences of violence in part because they feel policies do not include safe, fair, and conflict-free processes to address their concerns. As such, athletes fear negative repercussions for their careers from voicing their concerns. Recommendations are made to include athletes in the development of policies designed to protect them, to ensure clarity of language, investigative processes that reside outside of the sport organisation, and investigative and hearing processes with diverse representation, including representation of athletes. Finally, the ongoing evaluation of policies is needed to assess impact and effectiveness. Without clear, transparent, conflict-free, and evaluated policies, there will be ongoing experiences of gender-based violence, and the lack of accessible and safe complaint mechanisms will continue to act to silence athletes.

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The Autonomy of Sport

The Autonomy of Sport

Many researchers have written about the autonomy, or ability of sport organisations to self-govern (Chappelet, 2010; David, 2005), without external oversight or accountability. Despite the rule and regulation-bound nature of sport, with its criteria for eligibility, game play, scoring, and penalties, sport has resisted being ruled and regulated. As Bruyninckx (2011) pointed out, “Sports . . . take place in a sort of separate [autonomous] sphere, detached from normal rules and regulations in society”.

Juan retired from her sport a year after the Olympic Games having achieved her dream of competing at the Games and competing well. She was thrilled with her Olympic performance and, as a retired athlete, was enjoying the break from the rigorous training and dealing with the pain of chronic injuries. She now had time to pursue new interests and relationships after a long period of an exclusive devotion of time and energy to sport. But Juan was struggling with feelings of distress and disillusionment and wondered why. She had reached her athletic goals but was left with negative feelings about her experiences. With the benefit of some psychological counselling to help her make sense of her sport experiences and adjust to life without sport, she came to the realisation that she had experienced psychological violence as an athlete but hadn't named it as such until she retired and gained a new perspective of her experiences. In re-interpreting her sport experiences through new “glasses”, Juan came to understand that being told she was “useless”, “a waste of time”, and “not worth the effort” as an athlete was not something that should have occurred to a young person, or anyone for that matter. She learned that these are not normal or acceptable ways of teaching young people or nurturing their talent even though she and all her teammates shared these experiences. Her counsellor asked what she would think if one of her teachers said these things to Juan and her classmates. Juan immediately responded that those behaviours would be unacceptable and would not be tolerated by parents or school administrators. When asked why such behaviours would be okay in sport, Juan responded that “it was just the way it was” and that “because everyone was being treated the same way, she thought it was just part of becoming a top athlete”. Through her work with the counsellor, Juan came to understand that the experiences she had were not okay; they ran contrary to the norms of care for young people, and were not supported by research on how young people best learn and actualise their potential. Juan also came to the realisation that even if she had appraised her experiences as constituting psychological violence, she would never have reported her concerns to anyone. Her teammates were sharing the same experiences and beyond her teammates, the only place she could have gone with her concerns was the head of the sport organisation who not only hired her coach but praised the coach for producing Olympians and World Champions. Her coach was worth far more to the sport organisation than Juan was. In her words, “if I wanted to go to the Olympics, I had to stay quiet and put up with it. There were no other options but to leave the sport”.

The ability to self-regulate contributes to the insular nature of sport, making it resistant to change (Brackenridge, 2001) and seemingly impermeable to broader societal values, norms, and practices. As one of many examples, methods of nurturing children and their capabilities in parenting and education have shifted from command and control or autocratic methods to more democratic, child-driven approaches, in part due to increased knowledge about optimal child development and a desire to respect children's rights. This shift is reflected in the use of more humanistic or democratic behaviours on the part of the trusted adult, including the use of two-way communication with the child, questioning rather than telling to develop the young person's critical thinking skills, and disciplinary or teaching and guiding methods rather than the use of punishments. Although such child-centred practices now characterise many Western parenting and educational approaches, these have not permeated sport to the extent of being normalised. Instead, autocratic approaches to working with young people still characterise sport coaching (Cruz & Hyun-Duck, 2017; Kim et al., 2021), as does the common use of punishment (Battaglia et al., 2017, 2018, 2020). Similarly, the duty of care and duty to report that exists in formal settings outside of sport where adults are responsible for the welfare of children, including the reporting of suspicions of maltreatment, has not been exemplified as normalised practices in children's sport. The fact that Larry Nassar in the U.S. and Barry Bennell in the U.K. could perpetrate harms over numerous years and across hundreds of athletes was possible only in conditions where people knew or suspected the abuse and failed to act on their duty to care for the welfare of young people by reporting.

Unlike other child-populated domains such as education and childcare, which have oversight bodies that identify entry to practice requirements, scope of practice, professional development requirements, and have the authority to sanction members for misconduct, sport is too often left to make its own rules and regulate itself. Without entry to practice requirements, sport coaching is often populated by former athletes who may understand the sport but may or may not have education about youth development or pedagogy; as a result, many tend to replicate the coaching practices they experienced as athletes (Yabe et al., 2018). Coupled with a lack of professional development requirements, it is easy to see why sport practices are reproduced across time in ways that do not reflect knowledge advancements and broader changes in other sectors of society. In what other child-populated sector of society would statements made to children such as "you're useless" and "a waste of time" be tolerated? One can only imagine what parental responses would be if school teachers behaved in this way, and yet, such conduct is too often tolerated in sport contexts. Sport may reproduce and silence harmful practices that would not be tolerated or accepted in other child-populated domains in part because of the ability of sport to self-govern and self-regulate (Chappelet, 2010; David, 2005). Further, according to David (2005, p. 14), "No culture of monitoring exists in the sports domain, where authorities traditionally consider sport to be a private activity that is not open to public scrutiny and interference". In fact, in many jurisdictions, sport is the only child-populated domain that remains self-regulating.

Sport as a Total Institution

Sport researchers have compared competitive sport to Erving Goffman's (1961) concept of total institutions or near-total institutions (Atkinson & Young, 2008; Donnelly & Young, 1988; Hatteberg, 2018; Manley et al., 2016; Parker & Manley, 2017). A total institution is defined as "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life" (Goffman, 1961, p. xiii). This term defines institutions where there are strict disciplinary practices, micromanaging of daily living, surveillance, and difficulties exiting the institution. In sport, these characteristics of a total institution are reflected through teammates spending most of their time with one another, all following the same rules that are monitored and controlled by people in authority to ensure conformity and obedience, where teammates often wear the same clothes or uniforms and have similar haircuts, and where exposure to other people and experiences outside of sport is severely limited. As a result of these characteristics, athletes' autonomy is reduced while strengthening their dependence on the sport organisation (Parker & Manley, 2017). With a lack of autonomy, and increased dependence on the sport organisation, it is easy to understand how limiting one's social sphere becomes. Together, these conditions contribute to a singular identity and difficulties often experienced during the retirement transition (Wylleman et al., 2015) as athletes are left unprepared for life outside of their sport institution (Atkinson, 2019).

The concept of a total institution may also be seen with the conflicts of interests that too often characterise sport organisations. Many sport organisations especially at lower levels, are led by volunteer Board of Directors, comprised of parents of athletes in the club. Inevitably influenced by the impact of decisions on their own children, their contributions to the Board cannot be neutral and objective. Additionally, given the reliance on volunteers to run sport in many jurisdictions, it is not uncommon for the same person to hold more than one position or for friends and family members to serve in similar roles, thus raising concerns about potential conflicts of interests. As one Canadian National Team athlete reported:

Our sport is organised into clubs run by volunteer board of directors. Abusive coaches stack the board with the parents they want, then the club boards pressure witnesses/bury abuse complaints under the rug. They also turn a blind eye to the unsafe training conditions of their own children in the name of performance.

(Willson et al., 2022, p. 5)

Institutional Maltreatment

When an institution commits acts of violence or fails to provide safety from violence, institutional maltreatment is said to occur. Definitions of institutional

maltreatment include acts of omission or commission that inhibit or insufficiently support the optimal development of children, or that constitute abusive or neglectful actions or conditions (Gil, 1982). The violent treatment of Indigenous children in residential schools is an example of institutional maltreatment (MacDonald & Steenbeek, 2015). In sport, institutional maltreatment may be seen with practices such as trading child athletes from one club or region to another or by implementing training regimes that, according to many, constitute child labour (David, 2005; Donnelly, 1997; Donnelly & Petherick, 2004). Institutional maltreatment is enabled by the power and authority of the institution itself as is seen with institutions such as the church, the military, or elite sport organisations. Institutional maltreatment is also enabled by the sense of trust and dependency young people and their parents/guardians have in the institution (Smith & Freyd, 2014). This trust contributes to an environment in which leaders may engage in harmful behaviours that go undetected or unchallenged; it also contributes to efforts by individuals who experience harms to preserve the relationship with the actor of harm as they trust and depend on this person (Smith & Freyd, 2014). Young athletes and their parents may not challenge these actors because they trust and rely on the institution for the athlete's career progression. Together, these influences contribute to the normalisation of harmful practices in sport—practices that are not normalised in other domains populated by young people.

Sport researchers have addressed the normalisation of violent practices in sport, including psychologically and physically abusive behaviours, neglect, discrimination, and inappropriate touching. In a Canadian study of National Team athletes, harmful practices were not only normalised but accepted as necessary for achieving performance outcomes. One athlete offered, "The high-performance director thinks that the tougher the coach is the better we will become so horrible conditions and abuse were not just tolerated but in fact, glorified" (Willson et al., 2022, p. 4).

Characteristics of an institution that increase the likelihood that experiences of maltreatment will occur include, but are not limited to, identity requirements for membership; conforming to strict routines; valuing the goals and reputation of the institution over the well-being of its members; using the institution's reputation to deny or conceal allegations of misconduct; and institutional barriers to change (Smith & Freyd, 2014). Uncanny similarities exist between these characteristics and those identified as risk factors for maltreatment in sport, including regimented training, uniforms and general appearance of athletes, a culture of control, reliance of sport leaders' employment and the reputation of sport organisations on the performance of athletes (Jacobs et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2020). The case of Jerry Sandusky's sexual abuses of young boys is an example of institutional betrayal. Several people in positions of power, trust, and authority in the university knew of Sandusky's ongoing sexual abuses of young boys and turned a blind eye because of power hierarchies and the reliance of the university, financially and reputationally, on the performance of the famous football team (Kelly, 2013; Smith, 2016). The structure and values of the football programme thus enabled and reinforced ignorance of violence against children (Cooky, 2012).

Institutional Betrayal

Smith and Freyd (2014) suggest that when the actions or inactions of an institution worsen the effects of violence or trauma experienced within that institution, individuals may experience institutional betrayal. When Indigenous children of residential schools complained about the abuse they suffered in these schools, they were met with further punishments and abuse by those in positions of power (Dionne & Nixon, 2013; MacDonald & Steenbeek, 2015); this would be an example of institutional betrayal. In sport, athletes have claimed they experience further psychological abuse by sport leaders after complaining about their treatment (Kerr & Stirling, 2012) or being cut from a team by those to whom they have complained (Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005). The fear of potential negative repercussions or actual consequences has been cited by athletes as reasons for not coming forward with their experiences of violence (Willson et al., 2022). Others have cited a lack of action in response to their disclosures of experiences of violence (Kirby & Wintrup, 2002; Solstad, 2019). Some athletes, such as the U.S. gymnasts who complained about their treatment by Nassar, were met by complicity or the enabling of his continued harms, based upon Nassar's strong reputation within sport (Gajanan, 2018). As Smith and Freyd (2014) posit, institutional betrayal may influence the disclosure and reporting of harms experienced, and the chronicity of the harms experienced and their effects. It is thus proposed that a failure of organisations to respond to concerns of violence, or active silencing, concealment, abusive or enabling responses in sport (Hartill, 2013; Hartmann-Tews, 2021; Nite & Nauright, 2020; Udowitch, 2020; Willson et al., 2022) constitutes institutional betrayal.

Influence of Institutional Maltreatment and Betrayal on Reporting

Institutional maltreatment and betrayal contribute to the silencing of athletes with respect to their experiences of violence. Fewer than 15% of Canadian National Team athletes surveyed submitted a formal report of the experiences of violence (Willson et al., 2022). The athletes shared that they did not report because they did not know who to report to, they did not have a safe and confidential place to report their concerns without fear of negative repercussions for their athletic careers, and they did not have confidence in their sport organisations to address their concerns in a fair and transparent manner. As one of these athletes reported:

I would never feel comfortable going to my National Sport Organization if I were harassed in any way and would 100% need an independent body to report the harassment to. I would be far too scared to say anything to my coach or my HPD [high performance director].

(Willson et al., 2022, p. 8)

Another Canadian National Team athlete said:

Knowing we can be replaced, and our careers are on the line, you are regularly forced to ignore issues of maltreatment out of fear. I have witnessed blackmail, intimidation, favoritism, and experienced verbal and mental abuse. We are silenced if we ask questions. I am fearful that after I speak out, I will be punished.

(Willson et al., p. 5)

A recent review of Canadian women wrestling highlighted athletes' concerns about the self-regulating nature of sport:

at times it doesn't feel safe or comfortable for an athlete to come forward because we don't want to put our goal, our lifelong dream of making an Olympic Games, in jeopardy. Sometimes it's this fear of keeping the status quo, because there's been no independent body that we can go to and feel safe.

(Ewing, 2018, para. 5)

As a result, gender-based violence in sport continues in part because the only way to report one's experiences is to the organisation in which the violence occurred. Criticisms of self-regulation in sport is not unlike the criticisms lodged at the Catholic Church or the police investigating themselves for alleged misconduct in cases of violence (Kerr et al., 2020).

Returning to the Case of Juan

Juan's story highlights the normalisation of practices that are both harmful to young people and unacceptable in other child-populated domains. The overwhelming evidence from research and publicised cases of violence towards athletes highlights the occurrence of sport practices that violate the norms and expectations of care for young people. When Juan was asked about the consequences should one of her teachers treat the students in her class the same way that her coaches treated her teammates, Juan immediately knew that the teacher's conduct would be viewed as problematic and would be sanctioned. However, when the same behaviours occurred in sport, she appraised them as "normal" and even necessary to become a top athlete. Only when encouraged to consider her experiences in the broader context of society did she come to reinterpret and label her prior experiences as problematic. The autonomy of sport, with its ability to self-govern and self-regulate may account for the impermeability of sport to outside influences, norms, and expectations.

Conclusion

Sport has been afforded significant autonomy, left to self-govern and regulate in the absence of accountability. As a result, normative practices that have been

shown to be harmful to athletes are accepted and even viewed as pre-requisites for optimal athletic development. The autonomy of sport organisations to make their own rules, receive complaints, and decide whether to investigate them and how, has led to a system riddled with conflicts of interests. Athletes are well aware of these conflicts of interest as demonstrated by their reluctance or refusal to bring their concerns forward. Without the benefit of outside influences, there is a tendency to reproduce practices of previous periods rather than alter practices in accordance with changing norms and expectations. The end result is that sport becomes an echo chamber and falls behind changes occurring in broader society.

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Part IV

Recommendations and Conclusions



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Realising Children's Sport Without Violence

Introduction

The fact that gender-based violence occurs in sport can no longer be debated. The evidence is overwhelming that young athletes experience various forms of violence in sport, including sexual, physical, psychological violence, and neglect. Any violent behaviours towards children violate the moral expectations of adults to exercise a duty of care for children and their welfare. It goes without saying that violence in children's sport results from practices that do not represent developmentally appropriate practices and do not respect athletes' rights. Experiences of violence in childhood, including in sport, can have deleterious effects for short- and long-term health and well-being that may not manifest until long after the sport career is over. In this sense, gender-based violence is a health, developmental, and social problem in which children's rights are violated.

As stated in earlier chapters, the occurrence of gender-based violence in sport is multi-faceted and multi-layered. It is widely recognised as a structural and systems problem rather than a problem with individuals and therefore, prevention and intervention will require changes to structure and systems. As Mitch Garabedian, a Boston lawyer who represented survivors of the Catholic Church abuses, said, "If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a village to abuse one". It follows that efforts to prevent and intervene in cases of gender-based violence will also require a village. Preventing and addressing gender-based violence will require strategies targeted at individuals such as educational requirements, as well as policy interventions that stipulate expected conduct and fair, independent processes for addressing misconduct, and strategies to target larger systemic issues such as the ways in which sport is funded.

In this chapter, recommendations are made for realising rights-based sport for children. The implications of centering children's rights on the development of policies and procedures, education, and research will be addressed.

An Athletes' Rights Approach

An extensive body of literature exists in sport regarding the merits of a rights-based approach to children's sport. Much of this literature focuses on athlete-centred sport. Over several decades authors have used different terms to describe a sport system that forefronts athletes' rights and needs including humanistic sport, democratic coaching, athlete-centred sport, and more recently, autonomy-supportive coaching. For the purposes of this chapter, the term athlete-centred will be used.

Athlete-centred sport espouses a values-based approach to sport that centres on children's rights and developmental needs. With this approach, the athlete is "the focal point, and, as such, the organisational structure, sport infrastructure and decision-making process have been adapted to support and respond to the needs, values, and objectives of athletes" (Kihl et al., 2007, p. 2). Athlete-centred sport is both a philosophy and a specific approach to the design and delivery of sport programmes that recognises the child as an active participant in their own experience. Several tenets characterise athlete-centred sport, as described next.

Emphasis on Holistic Health and Well-Being

At the core of an athlete-centred approach is the prioritisation of the athlete's holistic health, well-being, and development—physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually (Clarke et al., 1994). Individual needs and strengths are accounted for in the design and delivery of sport programmes. Proponents of athlete-centred approaches argue that an emphasis on health and development is the best way to assure that young athletes develop the life skills that so many in sport claim are learned through sport engagement, and that benefit athletes in non-sport endeavours (Pill, 2017). Holistic health and well-being of the athlete takes precedence over performance outcomes and is used to drive policies, procedures, and programmes (Kerr & Stirling, 2008). As an athlete in Willson et al.'s (2022, p. 10) study said, "We need to value athletes as people first, not solely on their ability to get medals". Another athlete in this study commented:

Sport culture needs to change to value the holistic development of athletes (mental, physical emotional, and spiritual). That comes with placing less emphasis on winning and providing evidence-based education to increase literacy surrounding well-being of athletes.

(p. 10)

This emphasis does not exclude the importance of performance excellence as achievements are critical for holistic health and development; however, in an athlete-centred model, holistic health and development are viewed as the means by which performance outcomes are achieved. Rather than the exclusive focus on performance outcomes so often seen in children's sport, an athlete-centred approach assumes that the best way to achieve performance is through optimal health, well-being, and development (Miller & Kerr, 2002).

Ensuring Developmentally Appropriate Sport

Middle Childhood

Middle childhood, which developmental psychologists typically refer to as being roughly between 6 and 11 years of age, is when most children are first exposed to organised sport. It is also a time of life when young people make significant strides in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them. Motivation at this stage is largely influenced by external factors and, as such, it is not unusual for children to want to participate in a particular sport because their parent, friend, or a famous person engages in the sport. Influences of external forces contribute to frequent and seemingly spontaneous shifts in interests in activities—from wanting to play hockey one day to soccer the next (Parry, 2004). Recommendations in the general child development (Bloom, 1956) and sport literatures (Côté et al., 2009) include the sampling of various activities during childhood given the importance of this sampling for exploring and experimenting, testing one's skills and interests, and gaining exposure to various activities and people as a way for children to learn about themselves, others, and the world. The push for early specialisation often seen in children's sport runs contrary to developmental needs and the value of sampling.

Children in middle childhood make great strides in terms of perspective-taking or the ability to perceive a situation from another person's point of view. In the previous stage of early childhood, children show egocentrism or the belief that everyone sees, thinks, and feels just as they do (Galinsky, 2010), but in middle childhood, they begin to understand that others hold different perspectives than they do. The ability to see the world from another's point of view is important for the development of empathy, communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. In relation to sport, before children develop the abilities to see alternative perspectives of a situation or task, they are not able to cognitively understand offense and defense. This explains the occurrence of "beehive" soccer in which young children do not stay in their positions on the field and instead circle around the ball as it moves up and down the field of play. The cries from coaches and parents on the sidelines to "stay in your position" are a waste of breath if children are not at the developmental stage of being able to adopt another's perspective of the game, and thus enact offensive and defensive plays (Brady, 2004).

Although pretend play is most often associated with the earlier stage of early childhood, research indicates that it extends into middle childhood and is very important for the development of creativity and the practicing of interpersonal skills (Hoff, 2005; Smith & Lillard, 2012). As a result, children spend time daydreaming, which along with under-developed attention spans, accounts for the soccer goalkeeper who picks grass during the game or watches a bird fly overhead as the ball is coming towards the net. While others in the sport environment may view this as a lack of concentration, the child's attention span is still developing, their abilities to think in tactical and strategic ways are limited, and children easily venture into daydreaming. When sport is not designed and delivered to account

for short attention spans, children often get yelled at or punished for not paying attention (Battaglia et al., 2017, 2020).

Important developments occur in terms of identity at this stage, as children gradually learn about themselves, their interests, and capabilities, and how they define their sense of self. According to Erikson's (1994) theory of identity development, it is important for children in this life stage to develop a sense of industry, to learn about their own and others' unique capacities, the value of hard work, and to learn what it is to have a sense of commitment and responsibility. If these are not developed, according to Erikson, a sense of inferiority results in which a child has little confidence in their abilities to do things well. Children who experience a sense of inferiority give up before they have tried, attribute their failures to their abilities, and their successes to luck, other people, or external influences. Related to identity development, children learn to identify their competencies and lack of competencies during middle childhood, such as "I am a good athlete" and "I am good at math", "I am not good at spelling" or "I am not a fast runner". Feedback from important adults in the child's life play key roles in developing one's self-concept (Berk, 2015). When we consider the documented evidence of psychological violence in children's sport, including comments made to young athletes about being "useless" or a "waste of time", it is easy to appreciate the potential damage done to self-concept.

During this life stage, one's sense of self and sense of worthiness and competence differentiates into academic competence, social competence, physical/athletic competence, and physical appearance (Harter, 1982, 2006; Harter & Pike, 1984). Each competence carries a different importance or valence, influenced by socialisation, feedback from important others in the child's life, including family and peers. However, as children navigate through middle childhood and into the next phase of early adolescence, physical appearance carries disproportionately more valence for overall self-worth (Rotenberg & Hymel, 1999), especially for girls (Bucchianeri et al., 2013; Clark & Tiggemann, 2006; De Coen et al., 2021). Together with enhanced abstract thinking, children develop an ideal self, or "How I'd like to be", and a real self, "How I am". Developmental theorists emphasise the importance of congruence between these two selves for self-concept and happiness (Rogers, 1961). For girls in particular, discrepancies between the ideal and real self are recognised as contributing influences on body dysmorphia and eating disorders. These developments highlight the impacts that psychological violence through body shaming, negative comments about the body, and weight monitoring may have on young athletes.

Early Adolescence

The stage of life known by developmental theorists as early adolescence is typically viewed as between the ages of 11 to 17 years. During this life stage, adolescents make great strides in terms of cognitive development, with advancements seen in

abstract thinking, memory, attention span, and reasoning. These developments enable young people to better understand the rules, strategies, and tactics of sport. Together, a shift to increasing independence and internal motivation translates into adolescents setting their own paths, experimenting, provoking, and rebelling. Important to identity development at this stage is experimentation with activities, roles and relationships, sexuality, political affiliations, religious and cultural ideals, and employment (Arnett, 2000). This experimentation is critical to helping adolescents develop a sense of who they are, what they value, where they want to make commitments, and which directions to pursue in their next stage of life. Sport can provide opportunities for this experimentation through the incorporation of athlete-led activities, discovery-based learning, and enabling athletes to try various positions on offensive and defensive teams. The increase in exposure to and learning from others outside of the family during adolescence enhances the significance of sport leaders interacting with athletes in respectful and developmentally appropriate ways.

During early adolescence, a sense of friendship is of utmost importance (Bagwell & Schmidt, 2013). Peers often have greater influence on adolescents during this stage than do parents or family. In part, the significance of peer relations and peer acceptance helps to explain why experiences of peer-to-peer bullying can be so damaging. Of importance to sport leaders is the provision of opportunities during training for teammates to interact socially and to be attuned to negative team dynamics such as bullying.

Ensuring Athlete Agency and Voice

Consistent with the UNCRC which states that children should have agency and autonomy in their endeavours and contribute to the decisions that affect them, athlete-centred sport emphasises athlete engagement and voice. Athlete-centredness refers to a process in which “athletes gain and take ownership of knowledge, development and decision making that will help them to maximise their performance and their enjoyment” (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010, p. 13). In a developmentally appropriate manner, child athletes engage in discussions about aspects of their training and are involved in key decisions (Cockerham, 2005; David, 2005). By establishing the conditions by which athletes can exercise agency, they learn to take responsibility, how to problem-solve, make decisions, think critically, and express autonomy.

Enabling athlete agency and voice also means facilitating their evaluation of their experiences, including their sport experiences. To date, this is an area in sport that has received little attention. Despite the extensive time commitments made by children to sport, and the significant developmental implications of the nature and quality of their sport experiences, athletes do not typically have opportunities to assess and evaluate their own experiences. The recent social media frenzy around athlete abuses (Chidley-Hill, 2018) is an example of athletes finding

a way to evaluate their experiences and be heard when other avenues do not exist. As one Canadian elite athlete said,

Sport Canada . . . could implement a survey every year to understand the athletes' perspective on the NSO [National Sport Organization]—How well do you feel your NSO is managing funds? How objective/fair do you feel your NSO is in making decisions? Do you feel you can go to your NSO when you have an issue? Do you trust your coach/NSO, etc. with your best interests?
Willson et al., 2022, p. 11)

Seyi Smith, a two-time Olympian and former chair of the Canadian Olympic Committee Athlete Commission shares his cautious optimism that an important shift in sport is taking place that involves engaging athletes in decision-making:

There's a shift happening, for sure, and you can see it around key decisions. As athletes, we're being taken more seriously and senior leaders are asking for our opinions—not because they feel they have to check a box, but because they believe we have something important to bring to the table. The system is only now recognizing that a critical voice has been absent in sport leadership, that a third group—athletes—have to be heard in order to round out those key perspectives that lead to well-informed decisions.

A Partnership Relationship

In an athlete-centred approach to coaching, a partnership is developed between the coach and athlete in a developmentally appropriate way. This partnership requires a shift from the traditional autocratic model of the coach holding all the power to sharing this power in a developmentally appropriate way with the athletes (David, 2005; Occhino et al., 2014; Tomlinson & Strachan, 1996). Recent writings on the use of power advocates a “power-with” approach (Battilana & Casciaro, 2021) that enables the sharing of power to facilitate growth and development in others. This partnership manifests in sharing planning and decision-making with athletes in a developmentally and situationally appropriate manner. Athlete-centred coaches create partnership relationships with their athletes. The athletes are empowered and included in some of the planning, decision making, and evaluation processes (Kidman, 2005; Light & Harvey, 2017). Communication patterns also change in a partnership relationship, shifting from telling or directing to discussing and questioning (Kidman, 2005). By engaging athletes in problem-solving and decision-making through questioning, athletes learn to think independently and critically.

Emphasis on Extended Responsibility

In an athlete-centred system, the holistic health, well-being, and development of athletes is not only prioritised in the moment but also in the long term.

Such an approach recognises the significance of children's experiences for later development, long after children leave the sport context. As such, an athlete-centred approach is guided by questions about how the nature and quality of experiences today may affect the athlete and the person beyond the athlete, now and into the future.

A common narrative associated with sport is that it teaches children life skills such as, leadership, perseverance, teamwork, and stress management, that will benefit them in various walks of life outside of sport (Holt, 2016). To promote these learnings, sport experiences need to be designed and delivered in purposeful ways, including the establishment of learning outcomes, the building of an explicit, scaffolded curriculum, and an evaluation of competency development. An extended responsibility takes this long view to the health and developmental benefits of sport for children as they grow into adulthood.

Implications for Policy

What would policies look like if driven by children's rights in sport? First, policies that address violence in sport would extend beyond a focus on prohibited conduct. While it is important to understand what constitutes psychological or sexual violence for example, it is equally important to know what behaviours are expected, desired, and reinforced. It is one thing for a coach to learn that the use of exercise as punishment is not supported by evidence as an effective learning strategy and therefore should not be used, but it's another thing for a coach to learn about effective methods for addressing undesirable behaviours and teaching children acceptable ways of behaving. Otherwise, we leave sport leaders understanding what practices not to use without helping them understand what methods to use instead.

Driven by children's rights, the conduct and performance of sport leaders would be evaluated on the basis of the extent to which they contribute to the holistic health, well-being, and development of their athletes. Imagine an evaluation system that assessed athletes' injury rates, their enjoyment in the sport, the extent to which they developed positive relationships with others in the sport environment, the extent to which they felt included and valued, and whether they learned the life skills that we so often purport children learn through sport. To align with the right to have agency and autonomy in their experiences, child athletes would have the opportunity to evaluate the nature and quality of their sport experiences and these evaluations would form an important basis for retaining and promoting sport leaders. For sport to realise its potential and promise to children as a safe, healthy, and inclusive experience, we should hear stories from former athletes about the ways in which their sport experiences contributed positively to their development, health, and well-being. Policies and evaluations should include ways of soliciting such feedback after athletes leave the sport as a way of informing future advancements.

For such a shift in the focus of policies to occur and gain traction in the sport world, funding models would need to change in parallel. Rather than funding

based upon the performance of an athlete or coach, funding would be based upon the extent to which the sport environment was conducive to realising athletes' rights. Those sport organisations that contribute positively to advancing athlete health, well-being, and development, provide safe and inclusive environments, enable athlete autonomy and contributions to the decisions that affect them, would be rewarded financially. Much has been written lately about the problematic nature of funding sport based upon medals or performance outcomes and the overwhelming evidence of violence against children in sport demands that alternative, more values-based, methods of funding sport be explored. As one athlete in Willson et al.'s (2022, p. 10) study stated:

To truly advance safe sport Canada needs to take a long hard strategic look at how they are funding athletes. As long as the pressures and bottom line of money for medals exists, challenges around safety in sport will remain because the pressure to performance and the impacts of other people to perform will continue.

Policies would also need to account for situations in which violence occurs. In addition to policies being clear, transparent, and well-communicated, they need to be developed in a conflict-of-interest free manner with the input of athletes. Policies must be survivor-centric and trauma-informed so as not to cause further trauma and violence to complainants. When violence occurs, athletes should know where they can go with their concerns, have access to safe, confidential, and independent process, outside of their sport organisations, and have the confidence that the principles of natural justice and due process will be reflected in the process, without negative repercussions resulting from formally reporting their concerns. As elite athletes (Willson et al., 2022, p. 12) said: "If we are ever to truly have safe sport, an authoritative, confidential, and independent body must be put in place" and "an independent body that handles investigations and a requirement for National Sport Federations to be regularly audited by an independent body on their efforts and actions to change the culture of athlete welfare (policy, climate surveys, self-evaluations of sport, etc.) is needed".

Implications for Education

Although sport organisations are reluctant to require extensive education for their sport leaders given the large volunteer base needed to run sport, the implications of not having appropriate education are far too great. As one elite athlete said:

There needs to be an EXPLICIT understanding of what abuse is—in its physical AND emotional AND mental realm . . . Coaches need to know when they belittle an athlete it's abuse; when they withhold things necessary in an athlete's life, it's abuse; when a technician is in control of equipment and is

sleeping with some of the athletes it's abuse; when coaches are sleeping with athletes it's abuse of the athlete and all the others who have a right to be equally coached by that coach . . . You NEED to shine a light in the darkest of places by giving the behaviours a name.

(Willson et al., 2022, p. 11)

Neglecting the education of sport leaders also impacts the welfare of children to a far greater degree than the sport leaders. Connected with this education is building a culture of professional development amongst sport leaders. There is a need to counter the well-documented trend in sport that sees leaders coaching in the same ways they were coached and thus reproducing outdated, methods. The importance of aligning the practices used with children in sport with those used in other child-populated domains cannot be overstated. The lack of required education on child development may help to explain why child development practices in parenting and education have abandoned the use of punishment in favour of discipline and yet punishments are still normalised practices in sport. Providing up-to-date education on evidence-informed methods of learning and nurturing potentials in children will help to address the problems created by the existing autonomy of sport.

As the research on gender-based violence indicates, all forms of violence violate everything that is known about healthy child development. Education for sport leaders should focus on child development—physically, psychologically, and socially—and ways to promote this development. As illustrated in previous chapters, children will remember and be affected more by the harms to their sense of self than whether they won or lost a competition. Aligned with this, education should address methods for effectively sharing power with athletes in stage and age-appropriate ways, engaging them in decisions that affect them and enlisting their evaluations of their experiences. These approaches will require new ways of preparing sport leaders to work with children.

Across the globe, educational initiatives to address gender-based violence in sport are plentiful. Often framed as safe sport or safeguarding education rather than gender-based violence, these initiatives aim to raise awareness and understanding of prohibited conduct and processes for addressing misconduct. However, analyses of educational initiatives in this space indicate a weakness in not being empirically informed. Contrary to the overwhelming evidence that psychological violence is the most prevalent form of violence in children's sport, most educational initiatives disproportionately emphasise sexual violence (Kerr et al., 2014). Other criticisms include a lack of focus on desired or expected conduct, and an absence of athletes' voices and inputs. Finally, a major weakness of existing educational programmes is the absence of evaluation (Hartill & O'Gorman, 2015; Milroy et al., 2022). At present, little is known about what works and what doesn't and why; do stakeholders learn what we hope they will learn and how can this be demonstrated?

Recommendations for preventing and addressing the problems of elite child sport were recently summarised in a report by the Centre for Sport and Human Rights (2022) on child labour in sport. Amongst these recommendations were educating parents and athletes about their rights and creating conditions in which these parties have a voice, establishing boundaries on the participation of children in sport based on their rights, and conducting comprehensive independent audits of sport organisations' policies, rules, and practices to ensure alignment with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Conclusion

In this chapter, it is proposed that gender-based violence in sport can be prevented by designing and delivering sport based on athletes' rights and developmental needs. The literature on athlete-centred approaches encapsulates athletes' rights and developmental needs by placing the athlete and their holistic health, well-being, and development at the centre of all decision-making. Such approaches involve a partnership relationship between the coach and athlete, the use of guiding, questioning, and discussing as communication styles, and a sense of responsibility that extends beyond the time the athlete is in sport. With such approaches, athletes are more likely to have safe, healthy sport experiences that contribute positively to their development and through which young people learn about themselves, others, and the world.

Implications for policy, education, and research are outlined based upon a sport system designed and delivered according to athletes' rights. These implications challenge the existing normative practices in sport and indicate a cultural shift that forefronts athletes' rights is needed, from which everything else follows. Although such implications represent a drastic shift in the way sport is designed and delivered for child athletes, the evidence of violence in sport calls for such a shift. For children's sport to survive and thrive, such changes have become imperative.

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Conclusion

The potential benefits of sport engagement for children are vast and broadly acknowledged. From enhancing physical, psychological, and social health to the acquisition of various life skills that assist children in endeavours outside of sport, engagement in sport offers important opportunities for growth. Millions of parents enroll their children in organised sport annually on the assumption that it will be a safe, healthy, and growth-enhancing experience. However, these potential benefits of sport participation are not guaranteed and instead far too many children incur harmful experiences in sport. The occurrence of gender-based violence is one form of harm that has been documented in sport and in children's sport specifically.

Gender-based violence or the “violence directed against a person because of that person's gender (including gender identity/expression) or as violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately” (European Commission, 2014) has been the subject of research, media, and most recently, athlete activism. All forms of gender-based violence, including psychological, physical, sexual and neglect, are documented in children's sport. Despite the predominant focus on the sexual abuse of athletes, researchers have consistently indicated that psychological violence is the most commonly experienced form and is normalised within sport contexts (Parent et al., Vertommen et al., 2016; U.S. Center for Safe Sport, 2021; Willson et al., 2021). Some studies have included an assessment of neglect, highlighting its common occurrence despite a paucity of research on this form of violence. The perpetrators of these forms of violence in sport are most frequently reported to be coaches and peers.

Despite an assumption by many in sport that sexual violence is the most egregious form of violence against children, empirical evidence indicates that all forms of violence are harmful with particularly deleterious effects arising from psychological violence and neglect. The potential negative impacts of violence on a child's sense of self, their self-esteem and sense of worthiness can be serious and long-lasting, affecting academic performance, interpersonal relationships, mental health, and addictions. In sport, emerging evidence indicates that children's experiences of violence in sport are linked to disordered eating/eating disorders, depression, anxiety, and PTSD, interpersonal difficulties, less enjoyment in sport,

and tendencies to leave sport (Kerr et al., 2020; Ohlert et al., 2019; Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2020).

Understanding the causes of gender-based violence has been a pursuit of researchers for the past several decades. As the initial focus of gender-based violence in sport was on sexual abuse, characteristics of perpetrators and predators were studied. When the study of gender-based violence expanded to include psychological and physical violence and neglect, the focus on perpetrators continued although non-sexual forms of violence have less to do with the actor of violence than they do with cultural norms of sport and assumptions of talent development. Hegemonic masculinity, the performance focus on sport, linking of funding to performance outcomes, and the sport ethic are highlighted as explanations for the occurrence, perpetuation, and silencing of experiences of gender-based violence. Some sport leaders believe violence has instrumental purposes in terms of motivating athletes, helping them learn, and encouraging mental toughness, contrary to a wealth of empirical evidence.

Policies, and more specifically, failed policies, account for the perpetuation and silencing of gender-based violence in sport. Criticisms have been lodged at the lack of clarity, transparency, independence, and evaluation of policies, thus leaving children vulnerable to misuses of power by trusted adults (Bekker & Posbergh, 2022). Some policies not only enable but advocate for violence against women. The long history of policing girls' and women's bodies continues today through dress codes that perpetuate the sexualisation of women's bodies even when the sport is played by men in clothes that cover more of their bodies. The sex testing of women, which has been a long-standing practice in sport now takes place through chromosomal and endocrine testing that sometimes leads to unnecessary, invasive, and damaging medical procedures (e.g., Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Failed policies have also accounted, in part, for the reluctance or refusal of athletes or their parents/guardians to come forward with concerns about violence. Research evidence illustrates the fears of repercussions experienced by athletes who have no options available other than to report to those in the sport organization with conflicts of interest or who are ill-equipped to address complaints. As long as sport organisations are funded and the employment of sport leaders is based upon the performance outcomes of the team or athletes, conflicts of interest will remain in addressing concerns of athlete welfare. Athletes have spoken publicly about the actual or perceived negative consequences for their careers and their welfare because complaint and investigative processes are not independent of the sport organisation (e.g., Willson et al., 2022). As a result, policies to ensure safe, accessible, fair, transparent, and independent processes to address concerns of violence must be developed, disseminated, and routinely evaluated.

Problematic sport cultures and policies are enabled and sustained by virtue of the autonomy the sport sector is afforded. Sport has enjoyed the benefits of self-regulation and self-governance, establishing their own rules, regulations, and normative practices, including the perpetuation and concealment of violence. However, the autonomy of sport and impermeability to outside influences has

come at significant costs. As a generalisation, sport has not kept pace with broader changes in society regarding gender, sexual, and racial diversity and inclusion, gender identity and expression, and evidence-based strategies to develop talent in children. The disconnects between normative practices regarding children in sport and those involving children outside of sport have come under public and scholarly scrutiny (Bruyninckx, 2011; Chappelet, 2010; Cooky, 2012; Hartmann-Tews, 2021). To align the expectations, norms, and practices regarding child development in sport with those outside of sport, policy development and education on child development and athletes' rights, and measures of accountability will be needed.

For over 50 years now, many researchers have espoused the virtues of approaches to sport that foreground athletes' and children's rights. Labelled as humanistic, democratic, athlete-centred, autonomy-supportive, or rights-based approaches to sport, all advocate that children's sport prioritise holistic health and well-being, ensure the autonomy of children, elicit their input into decisions that affect them, and share power with athletes in stage and age-appropriate ways (David, 2005; Kerr & Stirling, 2008; Kidman, 2005; Kidman & Lombardo, 2010; Kihl et al., 2007; Pill, 2017). Such an approach prioritises the rights of children over those of adults and promotes the prevention of harms (Parton, 2010). The recommendations presented here are not new. In 1979, Martens and Seefeldt published the following Bill of Rights for Young Athletes:

- The right to participate in sports.
- The right to participate at a level commensurate with each child's developmental level.
- The right to have qualified adult leadership.
- The right to participate in safe and healthy environments.
- The right of children to share in the leadership and decision-making of their sport participation.
- The right to play as a child and not as an adult.
- The right to proper preparation for participation in sports.
- The right to equal opportunity to strive for success.
- The right to be treated with dignity.
- The right to have fun in sports.

These rights are as relevant today as they were 43 years ago. On the one hand, it is discouraging to see the lack of progress in the implementation of rights-based sport for children; instead, the sport sector seems to be characterized by the reproduction of systems and practices that enable violence against children to flourish. On the other hand, the lack of progress shines light on alternative strategies for change. At the time of this writing, athletes are exercising autonomy by sharing their stories of violence and using their voices to call for change through social media channels (e.g., New York Times, 2020; Murray, 2022). Additionally, many are writing about the dangers of funding sport based upon performance outcomes

and advocating instead for a values-based model of funding. Some authors (e.g., Hartill & Lang, 2015) argue that until a rights-based approach is implemented in sport, prevention strategies like background screening or codes of conduct are unlikely to impact change. There are some encouraging signs of progress with respect to rights-based sport. For example, Norway mandated a children's rights approach several years ago and, now, Norway is widely recognised as the most successful country in the Winter Olympics, with medal performances that exceed expectations for the size of their population (Farrey, 2019). Sweden has also recently mandated that the conduct of children's sport programmes be aligned with the UNCRC (Eliasson et al., 2017).

It is important to acknowledge that the constructs of interest in this book—childhood, gender, health, safety, and violence—are socially and culturally constructed and shaped (James & James, 2004). As a result, previous normative views of children as miniature adults have in many countries been replaced with views of childhood as a special time for nurturing and care. It is also true, however, that children in some parts of the world continue to be treated as miniature adults, engaged in labour, and bought and sold as property. In the same way that the sport practices considered as safe and healthy at one point in history may now be viewed as violent, our constructions of these notions will continue to change.

A review of the existing literature on violence in children's sport indicates that most of the research reflects the work of WEIRD scholars (Henrich et al., 2010) studying Western children and sports. As such, this literature represents a minority of perspectives of gender, sport and violence, and future work is needed on the experiences of those in non-Westernised and Global South regions. Additionally, an intersectional lens is needed to understand the experiences of gender-based violence; until sport is safe for everyone, it's not safe for anyone.

Sport does indeed present opportunities to experience joy, optimal health, development, well-being, and important life lessons. But, achieving these potentialities depends upon adults and the ways in which these adults design, deliver, and evaluate sport programmes and involve children in these processes. After all, how sport is experienced is far more significant than winning. Pursuing excellence in sport is important but the promise and potential of sport can only be realised when the pursuit of that excellence occurs through safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate and rights-based sport.

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