



The Line in the Sand for British Strength Sports. No Second Chances and the Creation of a Drug Free for Life Ethos

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ABSTRACT

Performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) crises in sport provide stories for the mass media. From individuals such as Ben Johnson and Lance Armstrong, to countries and organisations such as Russian Athletics and Major League Baseball. More recently, research has emerged that suggests that those who take drugs, even the once, are permanently advantaged over those who never have (Egner et al., 2013; Eriksson, 2006). This has expanded existing arguments related to PEDs, even extending debate to one that argues that PED use should be monitored and legalised in order to create a level playing field – as opposed to ‘banning’ athletes. In contrast, there are varying reasons for the rationale of ‘clean’ sports. In the first kind of discussion related to this the central premise is often about health concerns and PED use. In the second discussion, we hear much about cheating, unfairness, and the perversion of sport (Schneider & Butcher, 2000). At the present time, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) police PED use in sport and use Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) that allow a sliding scale of transgressions with lifetime bans not given in the first instance of a failed test. Put simply then, these ADRVs do not facilitate a system for those not wishing to compete with others who, at any time, have used PEDs. However, in the 1980's a number of people in Britain made the decision to distance themselves from what they saw as significant doping in British and international Weightlifting. They achieved this through creating competitive strength organisations dedicated to a drug free for life ethos. In this paper I draw on the experiences and reflections of some of these key people, and contend that it was the ideology of fairplay that influenced this movement, and that the rules on PED use should not be fully authoritative and determinate.

KEYWORDS

performance, doping, elitism, values, natural

Introduction

In many respects our use, and understanding, of the term sport is based on the culmination of a series of social and cultural contexts within history and what we have recorded as sports events (McIntosh, 1985). From these, the constituent rules that define a specific game, and that involve a degree of skill and physicality, create our determinations of what sport is (Haywood et al., 1990; Coakley & Pike, 2009). And whilst for a brief period of time the term sport might have been contested in the post industrialisation era, chiefly between the end of the

19th century and the beginnings of the twentieth century with the rise and fall of Turnen¹ and Physical Culture², any meaning that sport has contemporarily is now synonymous with ideals of performance and the Olympic decree of Faster, Higher, Stronger. In many respects, it can be argued that this modern interpretation of sport fits well and echoes what can be considered the ‘essence’ of sport in that many feel that it is timeless and has an unchanging character. This is largely because modern day podium and performance sport mirrors the very nature and contestation of the ancient Greek games with their reliance on, and admiration for, human accomplishment in the field of physical ability as well as the aesthetics of the human body (Young, 2004).

In the late modern period, the original growth of codified, rule-based modern sport under the UK public school system was complemented by, and accelerated through, the advent of competition and the rapid professionalization of sport (Hargreaves, 1986; Mangan, 1986; Holt, 1990; Holt & Mason, 2002). Through these interrelated processes, attention in sport was increasingly turned to performance enhancement, physiological testing, and skill development; all key tenets of performance sport (Lyle, 2002; Robinson, 2010; Day, 2011). So it is no surprise then that sport and human performance, once rationalized, would continue to be pushed in a scientific manner with, unsurprisingly, efforts at circumventing rules stretched in order to maximise technique, activity, and overall execution. And whilst it might be said that the *genie* of performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) was opened and let out in the 1950s and 1960’s - principally through the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR - East German Republic) and Soviet state sponsored systems and then copied by the West’s perhaps tacit realisation that fire needed to be fought with fire - any casual review of history related to the ancient Olympic Games sees that gaining advantage, i.e. through the consumption of bull’s testes, was always seen as fair game (Yesalis & Bahrke, 2001).

It is no wonder then that sport today has an underbelly, seemingly no matter how well policed, that echoes with the old Greek philosophy of improving performance and the more recent, comparatively, Soviet ideal of Anthropomaximology³. As a consequence of this some concede that the battle against PEDs is futile and that, given their prevalence and sophistication, testing for them in the context of sport is now redundant (Savulescu, Foddy & Clayton, 2004). This argument extends to one in which sport is best thought to move to a PEDs permissive (allowed) system of explicitly monitoring athlete health in order to mitigate against known risk factors rather than the current preventative system. Much of this concession is based upon the idea that drug use is considered to be commonplace in modern society, that all drugs carry risks, and that these risks should prove to be the burden of individuals. And also in part because some feel that the majority of top class athletes use PEDS, although whether this obviates the need to police PEDs in lower level/participation sport is open to question.

At times then, the hope for PED free performance sport seems to be difficult to achieve and perhaps is tantamount to no more than an illusion, one covering the reality of what actually takes place. The truth is that there has been a succession of PED scandals within sport over the last 50 plus years, with an acknowledgement that some athletes, some training camps and coaches, and even some state systems (most notoriously the former DDR in the 1960s and 70s) have encouraged and supported a culture of PED use. Nevertheless, notwithstanding concerted attempts to combat, and vilify, PED use since, since the 1980s – with, most notably, Ben Johnson’s positive test at the 1988 Seoul Olympics – a succession of PED scandals has taken place. Indeed, each decade

¹ Turnen was a German system of Gymnastics based exercises popular in the early 19th to early 20th Centuries (see Pfister, 2003).

² Physical Culture is a historical concept that embodies a range of health and fitness movements that started in the 19th Century, principally in the UK, Germany, Sweden and the USA. It advocated various exercise systems in order to see off what was then seen as the emerging problems of a more sedentary lifestyle. The movement drew from quite an eclectic range of folk games, combat sports, and various systems and methods of physical training.

³ The term anthropomaximology is used to classify a system that researches how best to identify, through a variety of physiological and psychological methods of adjustment, the optimum working state (including sport) for human beings (see Kuznetsov, 1982).

since has presented major PED transgressions that have resulted in precipitous falls from grace. For instance, the Irish swimmer Michelle Collins in the 1990s, the BALCO scandal (including the fall of Olympic sprint champion Marion Jones) and Lance Armstrong's positive results (and final admission to PED use in 2013) that initiated a deep introspection of the culture within cycling in the 2000s, and continued issues of state sponsored programmes (such as Russia) within the 2010s.

And at time of writing, many of the major sports leagues within the USA have experienced a number of PED scandals that seem to indicate that their use is rife, and somewhat accepted. There are also renewed calls to examine what seems to be the incredibly high incidences of athletes with medical conditions that require what some - perhaps cynically, perhaps realistically – state might be unexpected, yet luckily timed episodes of medicinal intervention (with recognised performance enhancing qualities) that fall under the banner of Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE). And added to this there has now been, thanks to the reanalysis of older samples though improved anti-doping methods, what seems to be, a wholehearted approach to the reallocation of medals and places from the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games.

However the idea that there is a unanimous consensus and approach to countering PED use in sport is false. Indeed, some judge that for any part of life to be drug-free at this point in contemporary postindustrial culture is virtually impossible. The position put forward by some here, one that this paper has briefly mentioned, is that drugs are completely integrated into everyday life and that any separation of athletes from the lived experience of modern life would be impossible. In reality, any conceptualisation of what constitutes drug free sport is complicated by a variety of factors that render any idea of morality difficult to determine - whilst at the same time advocating the administrative regulation of PEDs in order to show how this could temper, or control, what are already fundamental, factual understandings of the inherent risks of PED use in sport. The proposition promoted here then, is that a system that monitors athlete risk and lessens the potential impact and damage to health through medical intervention is one that is a) more genuine and b) more reflective of the intricacies, minutiae, and lived experiences of contemporary society.

As an example of how some posit what they believe is the futility of continuing drug testing within sport, Savulescu et al. (2004) presented a number of arguments to support this. In no particular order, these included such postulates as: the fact that classical music and other performance type 'art' allows drugs (for creativity etc.); That - similar to the previous point - the 'spirit' of sport would be enhanced by allowing genetic manipulation, ensconcing it as one element within a variety of other factors that lead to success in sport; That allowing drugs would create an even playing field; And that permitted drug use would be safer – if 'safe drugs' were allowed.

Yet it would be remiss to neglect the opposite side of this argument within academia. An example here is how Devine's (2010) position, in response to Savulescu et al. (2004), made what might be considered two major contributions to this group of arguments. These were: firstly, that the notion of drug use should be discouraged because it can unsettle what he terms the "balance of excellences" in sport (Devine, 2010, p. 2). The example he used is tennis, whereby a power game – facilitated by drugs – could 'overpower' the other elements within the game that spectators enjoy (i.e., rallies, returns, trick shots, etc.). Another more contemporary, topical, argument would be the development of rugby union and rugby league in the last 20 years, with power and physical strength perhaps seen to have overtaken guile and creativity. You can also add the sport of American football and use the emerging Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) evidence here related to the significant, long lasting, and debilitating effects of playing the sport to expand the argument. In the second position Devine (2010) advocates, he grapples with elements of philosophy and what sport might actually 'be'. In fact, Devine does use Bernard Suits' (1978) definition of sport to help here – one which is based upon an agreement by participants to adhere to rules. This helps us differentiate and make a moral, or more to the point definitional and existential, distinction as to what sport 'should' be.

Accordingly, these types of explanations allow for a range of arguments to be made both for and against the use of drugs in sport. Whilst numerous in nature, some examples include the call for a more lenient approach to PED use. One example of an ‘alternative’ style in this vein, made by Kayser and Smith (2008), calls for a prioritisation in drug usage (and monitoring) to focus on harm reduction and the like. Some, such as Harrison et al. (2014) also submit that the long-term adverse consequences of PED use need more study, including the withdrawal symptoms, whilst acknowledging the significant detriments to health that can and do arise as a consequence of use.

Clearly then, there are some important differences in how some academics and those involved in the wider policy making decisions fields regard PED use and subsequently, how any permissions and restrictions of their usage should be enforced. Yet at this moment in time, there is still an appetite for drug-testing and as it stands the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), and other organisations, police the use of PEDs in sports. Despite this, we have still been left with a series of cherished sports stars capable of seemingly effortless excellence, alongside other sport stars revealing a more sinister, in the sense of actively looking to circumnavigate or completely ignore rules related to PED use, set of true affairs. This is despite the advocacy and implementation, since the 1980’s, of a more stringent global drug-testing framework. In sum, the permeation of PEDs within sport seems to be never-ending.

Given all of this, this paper looks to outline what sport and PED use is, what it might be and, using historical archives and interviews with some of the main protagonists, outlines the manner in which resistance and contestation of the traditional acceptance of and penalties for PED use have already been challenged by a series of strength sports in the UK.

The Current ‘State of Play’

As stated above, it is the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) that oversees a range of initiatives that have the goal of PED free sport at their heart. Established in 1999, WADA is an international independent agency recognised and funded by both national governments and global sport movements, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). Whilst they oversee research, education, and issues of law enforcement, much of their *raison d’être* is centered on policing Anti-Doping rule violations. These violations include testing for prohibited substances, controlling efforts of misinformation, missed tests, tampering, as well as possession, complicity, and prohibited association (WADA, 2016).

But the very structural context of global elite sport makes the job of WADA difficult. This structure means that funding for many sports and sport organisations is usually linked to performance outcomes and almost predictable management patterns. This is underpinned, and exacerbated by (1) a wider culture of excellence which only values winning, (2) a growing professionalisation of sport which has added income to the prestige of winning (in a culture of excellence), and (3) a public demand for records and for more spectacular athletic performances. All in all then a dangerous combination that encourages individuals, performance directors, head coaches, and indeed anyone concerned with under-performance to take risks in order to be the best.

Given all of this and WADA’s limited annual budget - in 2014 just \$26, 684, 298 (WADA, 2014) and even in 2018 just \$32,102,828 (WADA, 2018) - it is not unsurprising that the difference between those caught using PEDs and the reliable estimates of the extent of drug use within sport differ quite markedly⁴. This is even more

⁴ For instance, the USA Doping Administration (USADA) state that there are “at least three million PED users in the U.S” (USADA, 2014).

so when some national teams benefit from what seems to be state sponsored support and the significant financing and resourcing that this infers⁵.

Ethical considerations

The fact that PEDs work should not be up for debate. Many of these drugs, steroids and growth hormones in particular, have their origins linked to the medical professions and are still used widely in that context. What is in question here is the extent to which they can help sporting performance. Whilst it is generally agreed that they help and that training benefits are accrued from dosing, at times arguments have been made that specifically minimise the impact that they can have on sporting achievement. Although admittedly, it is oftentimes those that dope themselves who profess that PED use leads to minimal improvement. Clearly, arguing against this position and detailing how it might be undermined presents difficulties. More specifically, the complexity of actually conducting tests and studies on the impact of PEDs on specific sports and human performance means that ethical issues in terms of health arise. It is certainly difficult to envisage how long term administration of PEDs for the sole purpose of study and experimentation might be ethically sound if it is for sport, and not explicitly for the medical community.

However, the evidence that exists certainly shows how they can work and, in fact, can work without even doing any training whatsoever (see Bhasin et.al., 1996). We also know that they have been and are still currently used widely at elite levels across many sports. And it is perhaps this notion of *how well they work* that underpins some of the arguments related to the use of PEDs in sport. In other words, do they work a little or a lot, and how advantageous is using them, even just the once, for athletes?

Yet before we tackle this subject in more detail, it is first worth pointing out how we might regard sport itself. One way in which we can do this is to revisit Suits' (1978) explanation of how games and sports can be defined, through analytical philosophy, by the following four pillars. That firstly, a pre-lusory (lusory equalling a playful state) goal needs to be established. For instance, putting a ball through a goal. Secondly, that inefficient means would be used to do this – in effect, making something harder than is necessary, i.e. having to kick a ball into the goal instead of shooting it through with a cannon, or more simply even just picking it up and running with it. Thirdly, that a framework to ensure the selection of inefficient means needs to be in place, in other words, a set of rules. And lastly, that the participants within the game accept those rules in order to allow the game or sport to be played. This is the lusory attitude, one that decrees that players must accept the rules to make the game, or sport, possible. Using these four essential elements, it is reasonable to assume that participants in sport should not seek to bend rules or gain advantage in ways that are detrimental to the game. Admittedly, Suits' explanation of these pillars in the context of sport extended to needing to define sport through being skilful, physical, and widely played and stable. Yet this qualification of sport still posits that acceptance of rules if a necessary condition for it.

Similarly, Lewandowski's (2007) constraint model of sport, one that builds upon Suits' game playing, argues first that athletes look "to maximize their skills and creativity within constraints" (p.27), and second that participants in sports are bound by conventions and rules. This is even when the athletes can play sports *well* and with creativity and skill (Lewandowski, 2007). Fairness then, bound within the constraints of rules and existing even within the higher echelons of performance, is the essence of both models.

And perhaps underpinning both of these ways of seeing sport as *fair* is the historical concept of amateurism. A set of ideas that arose in the 19th century through the UK public school system and diffused into the wider

⁵ Examples of national sports teams banned by WADA for Rio 2016 were the Bulgarian and Russian Weightlifting teams. And the recriminations from the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and the findings of continued state regulated doping systems had led to Russia being banned internationally.

political and administrative context, achieving a dominant position central to how sport was organised and seen. The main tenet of it was that there was a certain *purity* of sport - that amateur sport was not about labour but play - and that sports were supposed to be played fairly and with respect (Dunning and Sheard, 1979; Holt, 1989; Mason, 1988). And this viewpoint is echoed more recently with Zakham and Mascio's (2018) assertion that sport needs to be bound by an ethos or 'spirit' in order to ensure integrity. So, fundamentally, many definitions of sport and the manner in which we understand it are based on the idea that it is *fair*.

And this is where it becomes interesting. Particularly if we follow the idea that some like to think that fairness in sports will only be achieved by allowing all participants equal access to PEDs. This take on the morality of doping eschews any thoughts that doping is any different to other means and ways of gaining advantage, i.e. through high altitude training, supplements, sport science support etc. Advocates of this approach say that monitoring by doctors and sports scientists would ensure only safe drugs and amounts were used, that it would create a level playing field, and that sporting records could continue to be broken, further spectacularising it. Moreover, much of the gist within this argument posits that the health of sportspeople will be better ensured with a more universal access to the best available medical advice and treatment.

The discussions related to permitting doping in sport then are quite neatly summarised by Schneider and Butcher (2000), who outline four major clusters of arguments used to justify PED use within sport. The first is based on the idea of cheating and unfairness, the second, harm, the third, the perversion of sport, and the fourth, the dehumanisation of sport. The paragraph above detailed how the first and second would, in a system that allowed doping, be negated by parity and medical supervision. And the third and fourth clusters might be determined to be redundant by some in lieu of the fact that drugs, of all kinds, are ubiquitous in modern society. In this sense, and perhaps overarchingly, some believe that the use of drugs is only reflective of broader society and that any drug use, be it aspirins, anti-inflammatory drugs, penicillin or the like, make the idea of drug-free sport redundant.

So for the reasons above, and others, some people like to believe that allowing all athletes access to the same drugs and systems enabling, promoting, and monitoring their usage would invalidate any advantages gained from using PEDs. The issue here, however, is that this belief sits at odds with what are the widely understood consequences of using medicinal drugs, with, for instance, wide variations in how individuals react to different types of drugs. The medicinal terminology is often simplistic, outlining *common* and *uncommon* reactions and the range of possible side effects that individuals may encounter. These terms, *by definition*, acknowledge that individuals may well react differently to exactly the same dosages and types of drugs. Put simply, and in the context of sports performance, the reality is that some who take PEDs may well respond positively to certain types, dosages, or incidences and timing of exposure, all of which are based more on their individual genetic predisposition and physiology and how they can assimilate and effectively use PEDs. Given our current understanding of *talent* and *ability*, it is probably fair to say that this does not *currently* sit within any existing interpretations of sporting aptitude. And we can move on to what might be termed as the *really unfair* advantage that PEDs can give. Put simply, as an example, steroid use – even just the once – has been found to permanently advantage those who have taken them over those who never have through permanently increased fibre areas and number of myonuclei (Egner et al., 2013; Eriksson, 2006).

However, this idea of PEDs (more specifically, anabolic steroids) conferring a permanent advantage is more of a new one in terms of public awareness and discourse, and is perhaps not even truly part of the argument against drug use as of yet. But it is not to say that the *idea* of drug use, even the once, advantages users over non users has never been held. Please hold this thought as we will return to it later on.

Weightlifting/Powerlifting in the UK

Sport historians agree that the sport of Weightlifting arose from 19th century vaudevillian acts that preceded and laid the foundation for physical culture in the early 20th Century (Buck, 1998; Eichberg, 1998; Klein, 1993; Cook, 2011). In Britain, from the 1850s Weightlifting was originally performed under the banner of various other sports (Athletics, Wrestling, Fencing, and Gymnastics) until 1911 when the British Amateur Weight Lifter's Association (BAWLA) was created in order to bring all weightlifters under one self-governing body. The rise of international competitions in the early twentieth century ensured that the codification of the sport took place, and by the 1930's the trio of the Press, Snatch, and Clean and Jerk disciplines had taken precedence as the accepted lifts of international competition for Weightlifting under the remit of the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF). BAWLA continued throughout the world wars and post war with both Olympic lifting and All-Round Weightlifting⁶ (Crisp, 2016).

World championships in Powerlifting (distinct from the sport of Weightlifting) emerged in the 1970s and continue to this day with the same three recognised lifts of the Squat, the Bench Press, and the Deadlift. And BAWLA continued as the National Governing Body (NGB) for all three of these disciplines, alongside the Weightlifting ones. Be that as it may, in the 1980's a new federation, the British Amateur Weightlifters Guild (BAWG) appeared to cater for a wider range of lifts. This new federation then split into the British Powerlifting Association (BPA)⁷, and then onto what has become the International All Round Weightlifting Association UK (IAWA-UK), although the BAWG never *officially* retired. Also, other Powerlifting organisations appeared, most notably the British Powerlifting Organisation (BPO) in 1994, which split into the British Powerlifting Congress (BPC) in the 2000's⁸, which then in turn split in 2008 into the British Powerlifting Union (BPU) and the Global Powerlifting Committee – Great Britain organisation (GPC-GB). And in 2008 British Weightlifting (BWL - they had dropped the *Amateur* label by now) decided that they did not want to reapply to the International Powerlifting Federation (IPF) and recommended that a new organisation, the Great Britain Powerlifting Federation (GBPF – later renamed British Powerlifting), should take over the sport of Powerlifting in Britain.

Now whilst I have not intentionally set out to make the above confusing, it is nevertheless a rather convoluted matter of affairs compared to the very linear development that many other sports have experienced. So let's retrace where we were and where we are now. Previously, BAWLA (again, now called BWL), oversaw Olympic Weightlifting, Powerlifting, and All Round Weightlifting for the better part of the 20th Century. However, the current state of play is that they continue to oversee Olympic Weightlifting, but the All Round lifting is now overseen by IAWA (UK), and the popular sport of Powerlifting is now overseen by British Powerlifting as well as the BDFPA, the BPO, the BPU, and the GPC-GB (BDFPA, 2016; BPO, 2016; Cook, 2016; IAWA (UK) 2018; IWF, 2015).

The Weightlifting/Powerlifting split in the UK – ostracised and radical

But let us revisit some of the above, in particular, the splintering of the strength sports that started in the 1980's. Given the aims and scope of this paper, it is first worth pointing out the respective approaches to drug-testing that each organisation has. BWL is aligned to WADA, the BDPFA is not - yet offers lifetime bans in the first instance to those failing drugs test or contravening testing procedures. IAWA (UK) do likewise (administer

⁶ There were still 42 other lifts in the rule books, All-Round Weightlifting encompassed these with competitions involving select lifts as well as postal leagues (For info, a postal league is a competition that allows for the submission of results [still refereed] rather than competitors having to attend a competition).

⁷ The BPA has in turn changed its name to the British Drug Free Powerlifters Association (BDFPA).

⁸ When the original BPO aligned itself to another world Powerlifting federation and some BPO members wished to stay with the World Powerlifting Congress that the BPO had originally set up with.

lifetime bans for single episodes of PED use), and British Powerlifting follow WADA guidelines for their testing programmes. The other federations do not test for drugs⁹. And the original 1980's 'splitter', the BAWG had drug-testing as one of its maiden edicts.

So how did this *original* split come about? In truth, it is difficult to completely catalogue the history of strength sports in this country as much of it is unrecorded. Here, I am indebted to Tony Cook, Steve Gardner, and Frank Allen, three of the main protagonists in the development of strength sports in the UK in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, for their help in piecing together some of the missing links that the books and archives did not hold. Whilst it was possible to describe and outline what happened and how the strength sports in the UK split, it was not possible to understand 'why'. For this, the firsthand experiences and recollections of these main protagonists was considered essential for the true story to emerge. Here then, interviews with the three took place over a one-year period of time and included email contact and further confirmatory questions. With each of the interviewees the intention of the questioning was to clarify the author's interpretation of the archival data (such as NGB information and gazette/fanzine recollections), as well as to more fully aggregate the narrative as a whole. In short, the interviews were less traditional in methodological approach and more used as a corroborative tool to check on the author's interpretation of the archival data. This was essential seeing as they were at the heart of the story and allowed them to elaborate on the finer details of how and why strength sports in the UK 'split', of which the paper now outlines.

Put simply, the original split to the BAWG (and then in turn to the subsequent splintering of other organisations) was down to a dissatisfaction with bureaucracy, and the emphasis on the Olympic Lifts, on the one hand, and a growing realisation from some that some competitors "were marching to a different beat to their peers" (Cook, 2015, p. 77). In truth, it seems that some strength officials in the 1980's understood the distinct advantages that PEDs conferred and were insistent that there needed to be a greater emphasis on policing their use. An example of this is Steve Gardner's illustration given to myself of seeing many people improve from regional to near international status in very short periods of time; and improving approximately 20% after having had static performances for a decade or more. This viewpoint was echoed, with examples, by Tony Cook and Frank Allen.

The four individuals who created the BAWG were Tony Cook, Frank Allen, Clive Nevis and Chris Gladding, and they were later joined by Ken Smith and then Steve Gardner. Ken and Steve both then went on to create the BPA in order to alleviate some of the (high) membership pressures that the BAWG was experiencing with people devoted to just the powerlifts of the squat, bench press, and deadlift. It is worth pointing out, however, that the split was not carried out without first attempting to address it within BAWLA itself. The main protagonists involved in the split did, initially, report the PED use that they had seen. However, they felt that they were met with indifference, and at times even a tacit acknowledgement of the extent of the problems, but given no answer or solution. Understandably, they came to understand (or at the least, believe) that there was an acceptance by top officials of the fact that top lifters 'doped'. Once this understanding was combined with an undercurrent of bad feeling at the grass roots level, and once it appeared that enough lifters and clubs were in favor of a split, the BAWG was then formed.

But it was not an easy split. Indeed, there were lifetime bans from BAWLA (for bringing the sport into disrepute by publically acknowledging the widespread use of PEDS to the general media) for some, and alleged death threats and even an alleged arson attack on the home of one of the main drivers of eradicating PED use, who believed, wholeheartedly, that PED use sat directly in opposition to the essence of strength sports and that any use conferred a permanent advantage. They were, in the words of some of them, *Ostracised*. And their approach to insisting upon a lifetime natural status and exercising lifetime bans was seen as *Radical*¹⁰.

⁹ Although for accuracies sake, one, the BPU – does have an amateur affiliate that drug tests.

¹⁰ Both the terms *Radical* and *Ostracised* were used by Steve Gardner and Tony Cook in their recollections of the events.

This holds true both ways, in that some of the Powerlifting federations that arose in the 1990s and beyond presumably wanted to *ensure parity* within the sport of Powerlifting and, in an effort to create what they saw as an even playing field and individual choice as to whether or not to take drugs, made explicit the fact that they would not test for any drugs whatsoever.

But in terms of the natural movement, it is fair to say that the initial drive to promote non PED sport was undertaken by a small number of people who had the foresight to see that others would join them. What has happened since is that participants in strength sports, in the UK and elsewhere, now have choices. These are related to using PEDs, using them and potentially suffering a temporary ban in the first instance if they test positive, or choosing to compete in ‘lifetime’ natural movements that have zero-tolerance approaches to any doping, whether this belonged in the past or not.

Conclusion

This paper is historical in approach, piecing together documentation and interviews/corroborations of events from some of the main protagonists of the split that occurred in British strength sports. What the paper does bring up though, is a question mark regarding how sport, fairness, and approaches to and acceptance of PEDs may need to be tackled in the future. As it is, there is currently a conciliatory, forgiving approach to PED use, from global sport structures and WADA, in that athletes and sportspeople do have a second chance. Redemption, if you may. But while the reader may now appreciate some of the ways that wider society and indeed, scientists argue about the ethics behind PED use, some more complex ideas have been presented by this research. These surround the differences inherent within how individuals can either accept the status quo, or develop their own practical responses and solutions to what they see as the systemic disadvantages that modern day sport, imbued with the intrinsicity of second chances for those who transgress and are found guilty of PED use, imposes on lifetime drug free athletes.

This is important to disentangle, and the research demonstrates how in some sports recurring issues of fairness and equality for those who have never taken PEDS, and want to compete against similar minded people, took precedence for some. Here, I feel it is important to highlight what I see as the end product of the research – the fundamental ideas. Whilst the research sought to draw on the experiences and reflections of some of the key people involved in the development of strength sports in the UK, the research principally offered an opportunity to explain why fairplay was given such precedence within the movement (s), and how practical answers could be first informed, and then developed. In short, a realisation, one now being more commonly accepted as scientific fact and not just the anecdotal evidence from the last 40 years, that perhaps a move away from performance, doping, and elitism, to values of fairness requires a *natural for life* movement.

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Facing Irregularities in Sport: Whistleblowing and Watchdog Journalism. The Romanian Case¹

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- A) conception and design of the study
- B) acquisition of data
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ABSTRACT

Mass-media is often called „the guard dog of society” due to its role in alerting the population when an issue is identified and this aspect is feasible also in sports media. This research analyses the media’s roles, responsibilities and its relationship with whistleblowers. The main focus of this presentation is on methods used by journalists in order to identify and research sensitive subjects such as corruption, doping and other cases of harmful irregularities in sport. Based on interviews with journalists from Romania, using a qualitative interpretation of their speech, it will be possible to see behind the façade of the journalist-sources relationship. „How could we increase the rate of investigations and the number of whistleblowers in sport?” is a central question of this research. The study examines also how to ensure a more critical approach to the task of exploring the influences in Romanian sports and in what manner this case could be framed in the global context. It helps to understand the potential of sports communication and educational journalism to influence in a positive manner the dynamics of reporting everyday issues and eruptive scandals in sport. An inquiring and sceptical media could help more to enhance transparency and encourage other sports stars or sports people to take action.

KEYWORDS

whistleblowing, sports journalism, Romanian sports

Introduction

The irregularities and corruption have dominated the Romanian socio-political discourse after the fall of the communism in 1989. The increasing need of morality and ethics was present also in sport, where the media investigations had the role to report the abuses and the corruption. Media is fundamentally connected with whistle blowing and whistleblowers, because they are the actors in the investigation process and are seen as important sources. Their capacity to understand and to spot irregularities in sport is complementary with their will to make justice. The whistleblowers help journalists with information and testimonies. But, for the journalist, it is not an easy task to persuade whistleblowers to confess unethical behaviours. Usually the only reward for the whistleblowers is a clean conscience. Both categories have in common the idea of morality (Vinten, 1992, pp. 3-20), considering that the journalist and the whistleblowers search to reveal the truth. When

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disclosing information about wrongdoings, both groups are expecting to eradicate the threats or things that cause unnecessary harm to sport.

Whistleblowing draws attention to wrongdoings in society, including sports, and it has been analysed in different ways by researchers in social sciences, ethics and laws. This type of people denounces those aspects that threaten the public interest and fair-play. The problem of whistleblowing has been an area of study in the last decades. Miceli and Near defined whistleblowing as

„the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices under the control of their employees, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action” (Miceli, 1992, pp. 15).

The concept of leaker was analysed by Kathryn Flynn and it was defined as the distribution through the press of unknown/unauthorized information that has not been processed by official channels (Flynn, 2006, pp. 256-273). There are different types of leakers with varying motivations, including the whistleblower. In this research, we consider the whistleblowing action as a pro-social and altruistic attitude, which could be improved by the media and with a proper education. The pro-social perspective on whistleblowing was studied by Hersh, which brings in front the dichotomy good-bad, a frequent discussion also in sport (Hersh, 2002, pp. 243-262). The analysis made by Hersh helps this study to observe the place of the journalist when it is about sports heroes and irregularities. In the same manner, Trevino focuses on moral development and the idea that the interaction between individuals helps decision making (Trevino, 1986, pp. 601-617). In our case, this theory, based on Kohlberg’s cognitive moral development, serves as an instrument to understand the relation between whistleblowers and journalists in sports, where the ethics should have a high importance. The whistleblower is perceived as a person whose intention is that the wrongdoing must be stopped. Other leakers could have unrelated intentions, such as revenge, the need to be in the centre of attention, etc. Bjørkelo observes that the whistleblowing phenomenon is „relatively unanimous in relation to who may be labelled a whistleblower and in relation to what type of action or wrongdoing the employee must report in order for the act to be considered” (Bjørkelo, 2016, pp. 267-283).

In Romania, the idea of leaking information has a negative connotation. The origin of this linguistic distortion has a historic connotation, originating in the communism era. The existence of the *Securitate*, the secret police, was made possible by recruiting leakers or whistleblowers. Every informer/leaker was instructed to be loyal to the communist regime and to report every misconduct from the ideology (Deletant, 1999, pp. 64-65). As a result, this situation secured the idea that every leaker has a suspicious interest and his intentions are not ethical. The negative image of the informer from communism perpetuated until our days and it impacted the perception of the whistleblower concept. Over the past decade, these things have changed and evolved. For example, in the early 2000, Transparency International started a program to inform the public about whistleblowing and the fight against corruption. In this context, a law regarding this phenomenon (no. 571/2004) existed since 2004, but it needed some years until people were aware of it. This law is also known as the Whistleblower Protection Act and it refers to the protection of personnel who file a complaint about an infringement of the law observed within public authorities, public institutions or public companies. It is considered very strong in theory and proved its utility later, even though the implementation had its challenges due to a lack of knowledge of the law.

The evolution of the whistleblowing knowledge and the improvement of the judicial system in Romania made possible the bringing of important cases to justice. Sports had the lion’s share in the corruption phenomenon. The cases of irregularities in the sports field were revealed almost exclusively by the media. The journalists’ investigations disclosed the biggest cases of corruption, like “Bute Gala”, “The Transfers Papers” or “The Youth Day File”. The people involved were important politicians (ministers, state officials) and well-known Romanian club owners or sports agents.

The Bute Gala was a boxing event organized by the Romanian authorities, on 9 July 2011, when the Romanian Lucian Bute defeated the Frenchman Jean-Paul Mendy. The sports event was used for bribe taking and abuse

in office. The Romanian justice sentenced former Tourism Minister Elena Udrea to six years and four months imprisonment, and Rudel Obreja, former President of the Romanian Boxing Federation, was sentenced to five years.

The Transfers Papers gathered multiple corrupt financial deals regarding the transfer of 12 players from Romania to international clubs during the period 1999-2005. The Romanian justice sentenced to jail eight executives and management officials, who were found guilty of tax evasion and money laundering: George Copos, the former owner of FC Rapid Bucharest, Mihai Stoica, the manager of FC Steaua Bucharest, Cristi Borcea, the former owner of FC Dinamo Bucharest, Jean Padureanu, the former president of FC Gloria Bistrita, Gheorghe Popescu, football agent and former captain of FC Barcelona, Ioan Becali, football agent, Victor Becali, his brother and also a football agent, Gigi Netoiu, the former owner of FC Universitatea Craiova and FC National. They were important figures of the Romanian sport after the fall of communism and their names were part of the so-called phenomenon of Cooperativa, a system of fixed matches which has its roots in communism. The journalist Costin Stucan described his impressions regarding the Cooperativa and its consequences. "At the beginning I did not think that football was suffocated by the betting mafia. I saw many matches in the Cooperativa period² and after that I did not imagine that important matches could be fixed, with details. My beliefs changed when I started the investigation <<The Shadows Mafia>>. Hundreds of hours of discussions with football players, with people from football or people from the betting industry changed my perspective", explained Costin Stucan (Stucan 2012).

The Youth Day File was closed in February 2015, when the former Minister of Youth and Sports Monica Iacob Ridzi was sentenced to five years imprisonment, for abuse in office regarding events organized on Youth Day in 2009. These cases were exponential for Romanian sports after 1989 and they were revealed by journalists from *Gazeta Sporturilor*. It showed that the corruption phenomenon was a big problem in the Romanian society. In each of the previous cases, whistleblowers had an important role. In this context, media campaigns for fair sports were launched. One of those is "No to Abuse" in the journal *Gazeta Sporturilor*. It had a high impact on Romanian sports (Grigore 2018, pp. 90), determining people to trust in the journalists' mission and to highlight the importance of whistleblowing.

Method

The process of becoming a whistleblower could be understood better with practical examples (Charreire-Petit, 2013, pp. 142-175) and blowing the whistle should be considered as an interaction of the people that reports with social, professional and personal environment (Uys, 2016, pp. 60-79). The journalists of investigation are in a permanent research to identify, discover and reveal sensitive subjects such as corruption, doping and other cases of harmful irregularities in sport. In this direction, it is important to observe their work to find sources, to verify information, the principles of whistleblowing and the relation with the whistleblowers. The study is based on interviews with four sport journalists from Romania, realised in 2018. The four journalists agreed to mention their names in this article. They are important case studies, having a vast experience, each of them with more than 10 years in the field. The four people interviewed are journalists with an investigative background. All forms of media were represented in their experience, including newspapers, television, radio and online media. Note that all participants in this study are well-known as specialists of their domain. They have an evaluative attitude in relation with the whistleblowing phenomenon in sports.

Analysing makes use of the inductive, comparative and interactive approach. The interview as a methodological instrument is a useful knowledge-producing practice, being powerful in extracting people's views in greater

² The Cooperativa period of the Romanian football was considered the time when a limited group of people controlled the phenomenon, fixing matches, committing abuses and putting pressure, during communism, but also after the fall of the regime.

depth and it is considered „a flexible tool for data collection enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard” (Kvale, 1996). The main purpose in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say and to identify the context of their testimony.

This paper is based onto a general interview guide approach. The interviews were conducted following a general direction guided with a generic set of main questions, however there was no particular and purposeful order being followed. This type of interview allows for a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting the information from the interviewee. Qualitative analysis method is used to provide empirical interpretation of the conducted interviews. This analysis will be realised taking account a general overview of the media perspective on whistleblowing.

Knowing the principles, perceptions and working methods of sport journalists in Romania, this article main question is how is working the relationship between journalists and the whistleblowers in the Romanian sport? Considering this, multiple aspects will be addressed. To accomplish this objective of understanding the relationship between journalist and whistleblower, will be useful to add some secondary questions:

1. What types of whistleblowers are identified?,
2. What place occupies the term of integrity in the mentioned relationship ? and
3. How could be the whistleblowing improved ? All of these questions are identifying the challenges of this action in a domain where the concept of teamwork is essential.

The collected data are a rich reservoir of testimonies that helps an efficient understanding of the way how the Romanian journalists are working. To answer to the main question it will be tackled the way how it works the process of whistleblowing and the facilitation aspect (Vandekerckhove, 2018).

The first phase of the research was to collect data and to perform content analysis. After that, it identified the common themes in the journalists’ speech. Their strength is that they observe effects of whistleblowing in real contexts. The gain of the case studies presence in such study is, according to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, pp. 317), that it focuses on singular actors or groups of people and seeks to understand their perceptions of events.

Results and discussion

In order to achieve the objectives, the questions for the journalists were formulated so as to obtain information about the relationship between whistleblower and journalist, the approaching strategies used by journalists, whistleblowers’ protection and the typologies of whistleblowers. According to Fincher, a person who has identified some irregularities in their organisation has four options: 1. to keep the silence; 2. to take distance from the illegal things; 3. to report the irregularities to his superior and 4. to make public the irregularities (Fincher, 2009, pp. 62-70). The four journalists were asked to tell which of these options are more common in sport and each of them mentioned at least one of the first two options from Fincher’s categorization. The last aspect concerns especially the relation between journalists and sports people. The journalist seeks to motivate the whistleblowers to present as many details as possible. For this purpose, it is important to build a good sense of trust between the journalist and whistleblower. A good journalist will protect the identity of their source if the situation demands it, and at the same time they should be able to turn the information into a story (Martin, 2013, pp. 136). Moreover, the journalist should be able to build a reputation, and if he has a track record with important materials, he will be approached by whistleblowers. „The whistleblowers offer authenticity to the investigation. From my journalistic experience, the whistleblowers need media channels or press instruments that they can trust, they look for a loyal partner, to stimulate them and to encourage them to blow the whistle”, explains Dan Udrea. He appreciates that the cases that have appeared in the last 10 years in the Romanian sports press are a consequence of the proactive collaboration between journalists and whistleblowers. „It is to the credit of the press and of society that this open attitude exists. The media has developed and the whistleblower has many more options to disclose information. And they have other examples with whistleblowers to look up to, which was like a domino effect”, thinks Dan Udrea.

One of the questions addressed to the journalists was to appreciate if the image of the whistleblower is influenced by the role of the leaker in the communist regime. The interviewed journalists recognized this pattern and have identified a confusion regarding these two positions. Trying to find people that could help them by revealing irregularities in sport, they have often received the answer: „I am not a *securist*. I am not an informer or communist to offer you information”. The potential source had the sensation that he will be perceived as a traitor or as an exponent of the Securitate. In this context, for the Romanian sports journalist, it became even harder to find a whistleblower to aid in his investigations. Even if the source had good intentions and an ethical behaviour, the fear to be tagged as a „securist” was an important obstacle in the relationship with the journalist, especially in the first decade after the fall of communism.

Discussing with these journalists, two types of relationships between whistleblowers and investigators could be identified. This identification is dependent on the person who triggers the action in revealing irregularities. The first direction is from journalist to whistleblower. The media professional researches the subject and identifies the possible sources. The whistleblower is usually a person who has an ethical behaviour and knows the phenomenon. The second direction is from whistleblower to journalist. The person who observes the irregularities feels the need to repair the unfair conduct and finds a journalist with a good reputation, a well-known investigator, in order to draw attention.

Whistleblowing in sport starts in the first instance as a concern about a wrongdoing taking place inside a sports organisation or institution. Subsequently, the concern is evaluated by the tandem journalist-whistleblower and it is compared with a situation of good governance. If all the ethical limits pertaining to such a case are maintained, then the case is brought into the public space.

Each interrogated journalist confirmed that the whistleblower perceived them as someone with the power to change. That person who occupies the role of whistleblower is considered without power to take decisions and without the authority to stop the phenomenon and for this reason „must appeal to someone of greater power or authority” (Johnson, 2003, pp. 4).

The safety of the whistleblower is another important aspect to consider in the process of engaging in this type of activity. For the journalist, it is difficult to manage the relationship with the whistleblower because he has to protect the identity of the source. In conducting our study, the case study of Constantin Negraru is of utmost value. He was an investigation journalist, before he became the Manager of the Integrity Department at the Romanian Football Federation. Based on his observations, he explained to us that it was easier to approach whistleblowers in his journalist position than in his job as an official of the Romanian Football Federation. „When I was journalist, I was seen as their friend and the players came often to me, but after that, when I worked for the Romanian Football Federation I was perceived as a corrupt official. It took me time to convince them to disclose information to me. I was the same person, but my job made the difference in a way that I had not anticipated”, said Constantin Negraru. This aspect could explain why journalists identify many times earlier and easier the federation’s irregularities than the authorities. And in the same time the institutions of this type could start from this point to search other methods to convince whistleblowers about their ethical interest. Constantin Negraru has revealed the case of footballer Marius Postolache, who disclosed that in 2012 he played in a fixed match. Constantin Negraru was at that moment a journalist. His interviews with Marius Postolache were a revelation for the Romanian public, but the consequence was that the footballer was excluded from the system. No club employed him after that episode. The Romanian Football Federation acted justly after the change of the administration, in 2014, and when Constantin Negraru came as the Manager of the Integrity Department. This case shows that the relationship between the journalist and the whistleblower is complex. The journalist has a double dilemma. He must protect himself against the whistleblower providing inaccurate information and often ends up defending the whistleblower. In Romanian sports, the source is discredited by those against whom he speaks. It was the case of Marius Postolache and of other whistleblowers. In the same time, in attacking the

whistleblower, the accused people or organisation may also turn against the journalist. Often, the cost is too high.

To improve the rate of whistleblowers in sports it is important to find out who these people are. Could we build a profile for the whistleblower in Romanian sports? How could journalists find them? What motivates them to talk to journalists? Discussing with the four journalists, it could be observed that, based on their description, *the social status* of whistleblowers is diverse. They could be the cleaning lady, a secretary or an athlete. They could be well intended or to have an interest to reveal something. In some cases, the whistleblowers were anonymous and they have preferred to stay outside their reveals. In other cases, their identities were known and they had no worries to make a step forward and point out the irregularities. A whistleblower motivation is usually simple. They are offering inside information to the media about wrongdoing with the hope to stop the unethical process, but their motivations are diverse. And from this aspect we can distinguish different typologies of whistleblowers. Frequently there is more than one motivation at work. „Few of them want to make justice and they are considering it is appropriate to react, however I also saw people who are trying to gain something, either popularity in a sport, in an organisation or an institution. Also, there are others who are angry with their bosses or colleagues and they seek revenge. Sometimes they are combining all these reasons”, Narcis Drejan observed. „Many whistleblowers are driven by ideals and they have some values. Let’s name it conscience. Other are pissed off about the system and they want a change”, explains Dan Udrea. This is a constant element identified by the journalist, the willingness of the whistleblower to change something in sport and to do it massively, because talking to the press means to make public the matter. „The optimism of whistleblowers impressed me. There was hope exhibited by those people that things will get better, in a positive way. Of course, everyone has some personal interest when making such a gesture, but most of them are trying to help. Maybe for them, to be tired out or to be suffocated by the irregularities from sports was a reason to speak”, explained Justin Gafiuc. Depending on their motivation, whistleblowers could be altruistic, but they could action for a particular interest, personal or for someone else.

In most of the cases, the journalist offers protection for the whistleblowers respecting the principle “that the identity of the source will not be revealed”. It is the first step of the collaboration. But the whistleblower protection is not so simple. To validate the information, the journalist is forced, in the second phase, often, to reveal their source. Justin Gafiuc documented such a relation in an investigation regarding the doping case in Romanian kayaking. He revealed that in a first phase his sources were anonymous. But after he gathered more information and proof to sustain his arguments, he helped the whistleblowers to go and present their situation in public. „It was the biggest case of doping in the Romanian sport. In a first phase I had just some hints and little information. However, two people from the inside dealings helped me to find out the details and the connections, as a result of their own willing. They were the basis of the investigation and central in my next steps to find out the truth. After I cracked the puzzle, they came with their stories to argument my case. With their help, I have revealed the doping practices from the national team, the complicities between coaches and sports people, but also how the Anti-Doping National Agency managed the case”, says the journalist Justin Gafiuc.

But there are also cases of whistleblowers that do not even realise they are offering important information. They just wanted to point out that something is wrong in their domain. Only after that, they realized the impact of their gesture. For this reason, the journalist is responsible to ensure the whistleblower is prepared and anticipates any possible repercussions, by means of presenting him with the possible reactions, insisting on the utility of his action. Also, another side of the process of offering information is when the journalist feels that the source should be protected and he assumes himself the role of first whistleblower. Also, as observer of the sports phenomenon, he could indicate the irregularities by himself.

One of the questions addressed to the journalists was to make a comparison regarding the whistleblowers’ situation between ten years ago and nowadays. All of them agreed that the whistleblowers’ status has improved

gradually in the last decade. Journalistic principles are on the same page with the philosophy of whistle blowing. It is important to be proactive in building a network of highly relevant and credible sources and for the journalist to be himself an ethical person. In this context, our respondents suggested that it is important to collaborate with other colleagues. They may have valuable personal connections or know other possible whistleblowers.

At the same time, the journalists proved to be whistleblowers with a long-term, constant impact on irregularities. Their activity encouraged people from sports to identify their domain as secure and safe. These elements contributed in an extensive manner to understand the educating dimension of whistleblowing. Through its activity, the Romanian sports journalist pointed out the negative aspect of the domain and his reveals helped build an awareness of good *praxis* after 1989.

The role of education in whistleblowing was studied in few occasions. James Gerard Caillier mentioned that just one serious research on this problem was conducted three decades ago before his study. Caillier concluded that whistleblowing education intensifies whistleblowing in general and the association with retaliation is disconfirmed (Caillier, 2017, pp.4-12). The process of whistleblowing education emerges to improve internal whistleblowing and not external whistleblowing. The journalists' answers suggest that whistleblowing education plays an important role in the development of the whistleblowing process in Romanian sports. The journalists interviewed for this study explained that whistleblowing education could improve transparency in sports. They have observed that whistleblowers have strong knowledge about integrity in sports and respect for rules. „The whistleblowers have a strong personality and that means courage, education and independent spirit. As a matter of fact, education actually offers whistleblowers the arguments to be courageous and responsible when they see irregularities, even if these irregularities are not a direct influence on them”, appreciates Justin Gafiuc. The same opinion is argued by Dan Udrea, who considers that more important than formal education, in schools, is the education with real cases and that journalists could contribute to this aspect. ”The whistleblowers are examples for the others and their appearance in the press could be seen as a form of education. It is an appeal to ethics”, thinks the journalist.

Whistleblowing and ethics are related. The purpose of whistleblowing is to reveal the misconduct and irregularities that overrun ethics. As a response, in order to promote some individual principles, moral development and the abidance by regulations are indicated for inclusion in the ethics training. This could be an essential part in whistleblowing education. In the same direction, we can identify a few terms that should be better explained when it comes to whistleblowing. And a proper education could help. This necessity comes from a common situation. The case studies collected in this study unveil a general state of affairs. To hide and avoid possible whistleblowers, the people or organisations that break the law and fair-play rules are claiming the need for loyalty, groups' unity or shame. Confronted with this dilemma, the whistleblower makes a step backwards. In fact, they are getting a degraded dimension of the terms. For a better understanding of whistleblowing and in order to eliminate the fear and the dilemma, it will be useful to collect the terms and to explain them. It is recommended to present the ethics of the terms loyalty, unity, fidelity, faithfulness, fear and other notions in the sports context. Also, media could contribute to the educational process and create a comfort zone for whistleblowers. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development study, „media plays a potentially vital role in de-stigmatising whistleblower reporting” (OECD, 2018).

Conclusion

The previous arguments reconfirm the fact that the relation between sports journalists and whistleblowers is essential. The people who choose to disclose and call out on their clubs, federations and organizations, and turn to the media to reveal irregularities may have a various array of motivations. In a domain where fair-play and ethics are constantly promoted, the desire to reveal wrongdoing grows. Whistle blowers are more present in the Romanian sports industry as compared to other domains. Their need to seek justice is one of the most common

motivations. Understanding motivation is key for the growth of the phenomenon of whistleblowing, and in determining the accuracy of disclosed information.

From the previous interviews, it turns out that the journalist is considered more appropriate to use the information received from the whistle blowers than an official channel of reporting. Not only the credibility, but also the the journalist's rapid access to the public is taken into consideration by the whistleblowers. The sources want to avoid a battle solely in their domain (sports) and they consider that the journalists' action to blow the whistle in their name will have a more neutral, balanced and well-adjusted perspective in the eyes of the public.

The fact that the journalists are confronted with different types of whistleblowers makes their mission more difficult, because they have to identify the reason of the reporting action. This aspect connects with the journalist triple posture in the context of whistleblowing: to gather information, to evidence the irregularities and to educate. The interviewed journalists suggested the last aspect as a natural consequence of the first two stances of their activity.

The relationship investigator-whistleblower reveals a fragile and exposed system in Romanian sport and for this reason the integrity of the journalist is essential for a strong relationship, as Narcis Drejans considers: „It is important to convey to our sources that we are serious. In the same time, we aim to help them and their sport. They consider us as a force that could impose the law, but outside the classic law”.

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Challenges in Integrity of Sport: Current Practices and Preventive Approaches of Sport Corruption in Sri Lanka

Authors' contribution:

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ABSTRACT

In many countries, including Sri Lanka, control of sports is connected to political power of the state and therefore, the political patronage decisively influences sports, both in and out of the playground. This study looks at few identified areas relating to the impact of mal-governance and corruption in sports administration, and how general governance structure adversely affects sports integrity in Sri Lanka. The content analysis was performed on articles pertaining to the sport corruption in Sri Lanka. The analysis has shown that the sport corruption is a main and considerable issue in Sri Lanka due to the several reasons. The study recommended that the proper governance policy should be invented to the sport sector to prevent this issue.

KEYWORDS

mal governance, integrity, sport corruption, governance policy

Sports governance and structural politicization of sports administration

Sports allow billions of individuals to experience emotions and learn values such as following a set of commonly accepted rules and respect for others. Sports by its very nature maintain stimulation, harmony and passion. Sport is also a multibillion dollar business with intricate ties with political and private interests. It is now recognized that sports have great potential for corruption due to its exploitation by vested interest for personal gain, huge investment opportunities, opportunities to exploit emotions, and influence of sports in politics and business.

High profile cases of corruption, doping, and match fixing in sport, as well as mismanagement and lack of efficiency within sport governing bodies (SGB) have resulted since the beginning of the 21st century. According to the Henry & Lee (2004), the concept grew rapidly in different parts of the world, tinted with different cultures, framed with different theoretical influences (such as corporate governance or democratic governance), and with a variety of different titles such as “best practices”, “principles of conduct” or simply “governance”. ‘The NOCs must preserve their autonomy and resist all pressures of any kind, including but not limited to political, legal, religious or economic pressures, which may prevent them from complying with the Olympic Charter’ (article 28.6).

Deviating from the self-regulation of sports by sports associations and clubs, in 1973, the Sports Law was introduced, in line with the policies of the then government. The Law introduced for the establishments of a National Sports Council, sports committees and national sports associations. The salient feature of the Law is

the unbridled powers vested in the Minister, to directly interfere with the national sports at every level. Summary of such permissible interferences include the following:

- a) the National Sports Council consists of appointees of the Minister. Those members are removable by the Minister without reasons (sections 4 & 7),
- b) the Minister may establish district sports committees, and the members of those committees are also removable by the Minister without reasons (sections 11 & 14),
- c) National Associations of each sport are required to be registered, with the Ministry of Sports, and the decision to recognize such association, is left to the Minister (sections 28 & 29). The Minister also has appellate powers, on his own, against his own decision. (section 30). It is the Minister who prescribed regulations on the recognition of associations. (section 31). It is the Minister, who refuses registration, suspends or cancels the registration, or dissolves a national association of sports (sections 32 & 34),
- d) the sports associations are elected. However, section 33 of the Sports Law read with the Regulations made under the Sports Law, permits the Minister, to make “interim arrangements after suspending an association”,
- e) the Minister also controls the participation in sports in Sri Lanka or abroad of any individual participants or teams, representing Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka, we have also witnessed, during the last decade of continuous suspensions of associations, and Ministers appointing Interim Committees to run sports governing bodies. The situation has been aggravated with politicians, active or retired, becoming heads of national associations of sports. An interesting development is the inexplicable increase of serving and retired military officials being involved in sports administration, bringing in a different dimension affecting overall civil sports governance structure. It is in that background that sports governance can be truly understood in Sri Lanka.

Sports governance related challenges were often limited to closed door isolated discussions but occasionally, in the recent time, the importance of sports autonomy and need to be independent of political interference was raised in the context of National Olympic Committee (NOC). It is pertinent to note that 25 sports Federations/Associations are affiliated to the NOC and many of those associates are run by interim administrations appointed by the Minister. The tussle between the Sports Ministry and the NOC into the question of autonomy of the sports recently ended up with certain agreements reached between the International Olympic Federation and Ministry of Sports, which can be summarized as follows:

- The sports law (in force since 1973) will be revised within nine months, and the specific government regulations derived from the sports law will be reviewed within six months in order to make them compatible with the basic principles which govern the Olympic Movement. To that effect, and to ensure proper consultation with all concerned parties, a working group will be established immediately between the Sports Ministry and the NOC/ national sports federations, also involving the IOC (representing the Olympic Movement as a whole)
- All national sports federations will have to liaise with their respective Federations to review their constitutions/ statutes in accordance with the International Federations standards and the principles of the Olympic Movement. This process must be completed within six months under the supervision of each International Federation concerned, which will also decide, on a case-by case basis once this process is completed, whether new elections will be required in the respective national federations.
- The NOC Constitution will also be reviewed with the IOC in order to ensure full compliance with the Olympic Charter and the IOC's requirements. Then, the revised draft Constitution will have to be submitted to the NOC General Assembly for adoption, and be approved formally by the IOC. The new NOC Constitution will serve as a basis to conduct the NOC elections. This process (including the revision of the NOC Constitution and the NOC elections) will also be completed within six months. Until the NOC elections take place, the current NOC's office-bearers will remain in place.

Despite the aforesaid agreements and a working paper being submitted by the NOC on how to make sports legal regime compatible with international practices and Olympic Charter removing intrusive provisions, there is no evidence of any commitment on the part of the Sports Officials to implement the agreement. Unless these agreements are fulfilled, there is likelihood of Sri Lanka being suspended from the Olympic movement as happened in India in 2012.

With the present system of Constitutional governance where power is concentrated in the hands of the President while the public service is strappingly politicized, the sports administration may not find the required level of autonomy. However, as appears from the above, the national sports administrations are required to follow international standards in relation to sports as well as sports administration. It is pertinent however to remind ourselves of the Olympic Charter and the Fundamental Principles of Olympism, initially contained a philosophy but have now become virtually binding instruments on sports authorities. Given below are three of the seven Fundamental Principles, which may be relevant for the purpose of this Chapter:

1. The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.
2. Recognizing that sport occurs within the framework of society, sports organizations within the Olympic Movement shall have the rights and obligations of autonomy, which include freely establishing and controlling the rules of sport, determining the structure and governance of their organisations, enjoying the right of elections free from any outside influence and the responsibility for ensuring that principles of good governance be applied.
3. Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement.”

All international sports bodies such as International Olympic Committee, International Cricket Council and Federation of International Football Association (collectively called for the purpose of this chapter as International Councils) are nongovernmental organizations established to promote and regulate specific sports; and all national sports associations are members and stakeholders of those International Councils which standardize the international sports. Through the respective Charters and founding documents and decisions, all national sports bodies are bound to honor the fundamental values and decisions of those International Councils. In view of these international sporting obligations, and to be part of international sporting Councils, it is necessary for the Sri Lankan authorities to ensure sports autonomy, freedom from political discrimination and good governance standards in all types of sports administrations.

National sports policy and practice

The Sports Ministry, in its website sets out the overview and the functions of the Ministry of Sports. It discloses the objectives of the Ministry, which are as follows:

- to make Sport and integral part of Sri Lankan Culture and Society,
- to utilize Sports to improve health and physical wellbeing and enhancing the living conditions of all Sri Lanka,
- to provide knowledge, space and opportunities to everyone to participate in sports,
- to provide resources and infrastructure facilities required to develop sports as a whole,
- to assist every Sri Lankan to rise to the highest level in sports and converting Sri Lanka to substantial status reflecting clearly the image gained by it internationally as a successful nation endowed with skills in sports,
- to improve the sports industry in Sri Lanka and develop the economy by providing new job opportunities,

- to use sports as a major foreign exchange earning field in Sri Lanka.

In addition, on 16 May 2012, the Minister of Sports have published 11 paged Gazette notifications detailing the National Sports Policy of Sri Lanka, highlighting, among others, the policy to create the environment necessary to ensure the independence of sports organizations.

Unfortunately, there is no independent evaluation available in public domain to assess whether the Sports Ministry has achieved its objectives. There is no independent verification whether the sports authorities in Sri Lanka has followed National Sports Policy, particularly to ensure independence of sports organizations. Having regard to the structural politicization, one can conclude that the practice seems to be contrary to these disclosed policies. It is significant however, that there are no disclosed criteria in many vital aspects of sports such as recognizing a new sport as a national sport, allocation of resources (including for infrastructure), selection criteria of players, how sports economy is managed. Unfortunately there is no evidence in the public domain to promote good governance and transparency in sports organizations or in the Ministry, though the National Sports Policy emphasizes the need to ensure accountability through good governance and transparency.

Broadcasting /telecasting rights of sports

Sports such as cricket, has competitive international value for TV sponsorships. The Carlton Sports Network (CSN), secured from Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), the TV rights for 3 years, for a sum of Rs 125 million in 2012. CSN has commenced its operations only on 7th March 2011. An investigative article published in a leading Sunday newspaper, traced the profile of CSN, connecting to the ruling party and its political hierarchy of the government. There is no doubt that CSN had received TV sponsorship without any proper evaluation by Sri Lanka Cricket. To make things worse, the Secretary of SLC is the Chief Executive Officer of CSN There is an obvious conflict of interest of the CEO of CSN. Had there been any bids or bid evaluations on the performance of bidders and financial viability, and evaluation of past audited accounts of the bidders, CSN could not have secured TV sponsorship. There is also inexplicable silence, on the part of the State owned television stations (Rupavahini and ITN), or the private TV stations such as MTV, why they have not submitted bids for TV sponsorship. It was later revealed that there was no wide publicity given for the calling of bids. Those TV stations have previously secured the bids in competitive market.

Investigations into the TV rights of CSN also discloses interestingly, how Sri Lanka's TRC grants TV operation license and how sports related corruption is linked to wider governance issues in the country. Telecommunication Regulatory Commission - TRC (established under Act No 25 of 1991 amended by 27 of 1997) is headed by the Secretary to the Ministry. Presently the Ministry of Media is a portfolio held by the President. The Director General of TRC, who is a paid employee, is also a member of the Board. There are series of allegations of TRC of having being involved in direct political activities, such as sending free SMS messages from a presidential candidate (The President, who is also the Minister) during election campaigns. After President Rajapaksha assumed office on 19th November 2005, 12 new TV channel licenses were given, amongst them CSN. However, CSN commenced operations only on 7th March 2011. This shows how the political authorities have had a hand in firstly securing a TV broadcasting license, and then, in securing financial gold mine of cricket broadcasting license for a meager amount.

Infrastructural developments and Corruption

Sports are closely linked to infrastructural development, particularly when such sport is a national game involving a large population. In Sri Lanka we have seen many such infrastructural developments in the game of Cricket. Sri Lanka presently has 11 cricket stadiums. In 2009, two new stadiums were built in Thanamalwila (Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium) and Pallekelle, with a capacity of 35000 spectators¹³ in each stadium, in preparation of the 2011 World Cup. There is no evidence of

Feasibility study or need assessment of such new stadium for Sri Lanka, in addition to the existing 10 stadiums. It was reported in 2013 October that the Sri Lanka Cricket is negotiating with the Government to have Rs.3.2 Billion debt incurred for the building of stadiums written off. In 2011, COPE questioned the former interim committee members of Sri Lanka Cricket, after the Auditor General's Department's report on Sri Lanka Cricket. According to the media, the Report revealed a Rs. 290 million overdraft, and expenditure of Rs.4 billion in excess of the amount allocated for preparing three play grounds for the cricket world cup and negligence on the part of the administration. Though new stadiums were built, the Sri Lanka Cricket has no funds or capacity to manage these stadiums. Military, which is occupying the building, is maintaining these infrastructures, again at the public cost. Sri Lanka cricket has a massive cadre over 280. These details disclose the internal management failures and how overall political commands dictate to the sports governance. One famous sports commentator, Vaibhav Vats, comments on this cricket stadium as follows¹⁸. "After a monotonous hour long drive, the cricket stadium appeared. Two floodlights towers rose above the surrounding jungle. MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA INTERNATIONAL CRICKET STADIUM — the name was inscribed in baroque capital lettering. There was little hum an activity in its vicinity. I could not think of a stranger location for a cricket stadium."

As pointed out above, Official website and the sports policy announced that sports would be an active contributor to the economic development of the country, and therefore one would expect the Sports Ministry in sports governance to bear in mind the value for money in huge investments made in the name of sports. However, the unanswered questions of these new stadiums, economic losses and secrecy of decision making reveal the context in which games are exploited for personal gain, through infrastructure development opportunities.

Recommendations

Politicization of sports associations has created multiple challenges to sports integrity, particularly the autonomy of sport and social acceptance of the sports. Politicization of sport has made sports associations extremely vulnerable for all forms of corruption such as conflict of interest, misappropriation, fraud, manipulations etc., with the risk of taking the game away from the sports loving citizens. Thus it is critical that the Sports Law is amended taking away the Minister's intrusive interferences into sports associations. Such amendments should ensure that sports associations are accountable to public and to the stake holders, while protecting the game against vested interests.

Sri Lankan sports require a review of its internal governance. It should also ensure Transparency and accountability in its decision making process and operations. In addition to auditing of their accounts, the associations should be more open on use of their funds and policies. This should commence initially with major sports such as cricket, volley ball, football, rugby and athletics. However, this will not be sufficient unless the Ministry of Sports encourages international governance within its own Ministry as well. All those who are involved in sports should understand the governance structures, policies, procedures and the finances of the sports associations. This would be futile unless detailed financial reporting of funds is not made. The sports associations must be open to outside scrutiny. Their attitude of an "old boys' network", 'our click' will vitiate such standards. Sports associations should have a public policy of zero tolerance of corruption in all vulnerable stages such as selection of players, contracting, infrastructure development, TV broadcasting, ticket sales etc., All sports associations should encourage independent whistle blower protection policies. Whistle blower procedures should be confidential and accessible to all the stake holders of the game. In Sports involving agents and intermediaries such as cricket, there should be clear guidelines for due diligence checks on all members of syndicates or franchises. Private promoters should be subjected to strong scrutiny. Each sport association should have an anti-corruption policy and an anti-corruption unit, consistent with global practices.

National sport administrations are part of international sports bodies, which operate under founding documents and Charters containing certain international standards and values. It is incumbent upon national authorities to

operate the games in keeping with those international standards. Therefore, it is necessary to change the existing laws and practices in keeping with international standards and the implement it candidly. Importance of introducing National Policies and National Rules Governing Sports will be negated by not implementing core values of those policies.

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Analyzing the Roles of Country Image, Nation Branding, and Public Diplomacy through the Evolution of the Modern Olympic Movement

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ABSTRACT

Since the Ancient Greek athletics and through the revivals of the Olympic Movement and the first modern Olympics in Athens in 1896, countries, cities and governments have sought to take advantage by hosting Olympic Games and other sport events. The purpose of this study is to analyze the different facets of country image through the evolution of the Olympic movement. Countries and governments used and will continue to use the Games to renovate infrastructure, build new facilities, expose local products and new technologies, leverage tourism, improve the local and international political and social image, promote tourism and show superiority on the sports field that will enable them to try and reach their economic, political and social goals. The article is significant as it analyzes how countries, cities, communities, and other pressure groups used the Olympic Games, since the revival of the Olympic Movement in the late 19th century, the new traditions after World War I, the political era after World War II and during the Cold War, the commercialized era and the legacy-oriented era in early 21st century.

KEYWORDS

country image, Olympic Games, sports diplomacy, nation branding

Introduction

For over 2,500 years, from the athletic competitions in 776 BC that were held in Ancient Olympia in Greece to the Modern Olympics in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the Olympic Games were used as a leverage tool for economic, social and political goals (Dubinsky, 2019; Miller, 2004a; Preuss, 2015). The purpose of this study is to analyze how different facets of country image reflected in the Olympic Games through the evolution of the Modern Olympic Movement: How through the historical evolution of the movement, hosting and participating countries used the Olympic Games in more sophisticated ways. The athletic competitions in Ancient Greece set some of the foundations for the Modern Olympic Games, not only in terms of the competitions, but also on their social, political, economic, and cultural importance (Murray, 2018). The uniting impact they had as a Pan-Hellenic tradition (Miller, 2004a), could be found in the Olympic Games in the Twenty-First Century. Some of the positive impacts of the Modern Games are rooted in the Ancient athletic competitions in Olympia (Guttmann, 2002; Murray, 2018). The concepts of Ekecheiria that is now known as the Olympic Truce, the value of Arête that embodies the philosophy of Olympism and the promotion of values through athletics and the importance of arts and culture can all be found both in Ancient Olympia and in the

Modern Olympic Movement (Binder, 2007; Miller, 2004a; 2004b). However, cheating, corruption, exclusion, politics and violence which are part of modern sports (Boykoff, 2016) could also be traced back to antiquity (Miller, 2004a; 2004b). The Modern Olympic Games were revived by French Baron Pierre de Coubertin as athletic competitions for amateurs (Georgiadis, 2003), yet in a few decades they became a mega event broadcasted to 220 countries and territories (IOC, 2018), generating revenues of billion USD from broadcasting rights, TOP (The Olympic Partners) programs, OCOG (Olympic Games Organizing Committee) sponsorships, ticketing and licensing (IOC, 2018). From Ancient times until the Twenty-First Century, different Olympic stakeholders tried and are still trying to use them to enjoy a better image that will help them achieve or improved their political, social, and economic goals.

Countries, cities, and other stakeholders used the Olympic Games to improve their images. Country image is a multidisciplinary field of research (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015) influenced by disciplines such as sociology and psychology, political science, business management and communications. Fields of research such as public diplomacy (Cull, 2008) and soft power (Nye, 2008), national and collective identity (David & Bar-Tal, 2009), agenda setting and framing (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Yoo, Smith & Kim, 2015) Countries, and place branding (Anholt, 2010) influence the field of country image (Fan 2010). Countries, cities and communities have been using sports for public diplomacy (Arning, 2013; Dubinsky, 2019) to achieve social, political, and financial goals, and improve the image of the country. According to Anholt (2010, p. 81), “a successful Olympics is the start of the process not the end”. The international exposure, the focus on culture, and peaceful values in sports make it a useful tool for countries to use soft power (Nye 2008) to achieve national and international goals and improve their images. However, according to Anholt (2010, p. 81) “it takes more than sporting events to build a national image: policy, products, people, culture, tourism, and business have to work together to *earn* the country a better reputation”. This study discusses the historical development of the Modern Olympic Movement through the different lenses of country image and related fields.

Revival of the Olympic Games

The role of country image is reflected through the first period of the revival of the modern Olympic Games, especially through national identity and public diplomacy. The revival of the Olympic Movement is mostly attributed to the French Baron Pierre De Coubertin (Georgiadis, 2003), but it is also a result of countries such as France, England, Prussia (today Germany) and Greece to use physical activity, and athletic competitions for social and political goals (Boykoff, 2016; Guttmann, 2002). While country image was not the goal of the influencing European countries, collective identity (David & Bar-Tal, 2009) and the idea of creating a united community through sports was. De Coubertin wanted to re-create that society - a society of people with harmonious balance of body, mind and spirit (Georgiadis 2013). He saw the athletes as ambassadors of Peace and Truce, an idea going back to the ancient Ekecheiria (Miller, 2004a) – the respected truce between the Ancient Greek City-State around the athletic competitions in Olympia.

Unlike public diplomacy that comes from the government and is tied to foreign policy (Cull, 2008), De Coubertin saw the Olympic Games as a non-political movement that connects between communities. One of the most influential people on the French Baron Pierre De Coubertin was the British Doctor, William Penny Brooks, who started the Much Wenlock Olympian Games in 1850 (Georgiadis, 2003). The popularity of the Wenlock Games and emphasize on education, captured De Coubertin's mind. He was highly influenced and inspired by his correspondences with Dr Brooks and his visit to the Much Wenlock Olympian Games in 1890, played a key part in the way the modern Olympic Games were revived and the ethos they were founded on. Influenced by the collegial athletics system in the United States, by Brooks' Much Wenlock Games and by the Greek "Zappas Games" (Georgiadis, 2003) and with International sports federations joining, the International Olympic Committee was established in 1894 (Guttmann, 2002). As Dubinsky (2019) argues, the use of sports

for public diplomacy goes back to the athletic competitions in Ancient Greece. De Coubertin recognized the importance of centralizing the Modern Olympic Games around Greece and the Ancient Mythology.

To connect the new Modern Olympic Games to the Ancient Olympics, Greek businessman Dimitrus Vikelas was named the first President of the International Olympic Committee and the first modern Olympic Games and Athens was chosen to host the first modern Olympic Games in 1896 (Guttman, 2002). Much like in the Ancient ones, women were not allowed to compete there as well. After Athens 1896, De Coubertin became the President of the IOC and the second modern Olympics were held in Paris in 1900, the hometown of the French Barron. During the first period countries did not identified ways to use the games to improve their images and the Games had mostly marginal international impact (Dubinsky, 2017). The games were mostly part of other international events and festivals and suffered from many organizational and economic problems. In Paris 1900 and in St. Louis in 1904, the games were part of the World Fair and in 1908 in London they were part of the Franco-British exhibition (Dubinsky, 2017). The Olympic Games were revived, but there was still a learning curve (Guttman, 2002).

However, international politics were part of the games almost from their establishment. After the Americans used the 1904 Olympic Games in St. Louis to show their athletic superiority (Guttman, 2002), in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in London in 1908 the American flag was not raised (Boykoff, 2016). As a reaction the American delegation did not lower their flag when they paraded before the British King and Queen. In 1912 the games went to Stockholm and for the first time the question of independence was raised when Finland and Bohemia were forced to march in the opening ceremony under the flags of Russia and Austria respectfully (Guttman, 2002). Thus, countries did start to recognize the potential the Olympic Games had in serving broader international goals. Because of the World War I (1914-1918) the planned 1916 Berlin Olympic Games that were scheduled got cancelled (Guttman, 2002). When analyzing through disciplinaries Buhmann and Ingenhoff (2015) argue that influence country image research, in the first period of the Modern Olympic Games countries started to recognize the potential of the Olympic Games, but the use for branding and image purposes was mostly done through limited public diplomacy and was reflected especially through national identity.

Recognizing the potential

The first significant use of the Olympic Games to change countries images started after World War I (Dubinsky, 2019). If before World War I the Olympic Games were still struggling to find their place, in the period between the wars, the Games started to form their own structure and create their own traditions and countries started to recognize the potential of using the games for their own goals (Dubinsky, 2017). Country image also started to play more significant roles, especially through public diplomacy and the way countries used the games for foreign policy purposes. Antwerp was the first city to host the games after the war in 1920; however Germany and its war allies, Austria, Bulgaria, the Ottoman Empire and Hungary were excluded (Guttman, 2002; Murray, 2018). Germany was also excluded from the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris. An Olympic flag was used for the first time in Antwerp 1920 and the Five Olympic Rings made their first Olympic debut there. In 1924 the first Winter Olympic Games took place for the first time, in Chamonix, France and in the 1928 Games in Amsterdam the Olympic flame was burning in the Olympic Torch at the Olympic Stadium (Guttman, 2002). Thus, countries started to recognize the development of the Olympic Movement and contributed to forming new traditions. During the Great Depression, in the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, the local business Helms Bakery, supplied bread to the Olympic Village (George, 2012). Helms Bakery associated itself with "Olympic bread", being "Olympic Games bakers", and "Choice of Olympic champions" (George, 2012), which later started a long legal dispute about the intellectual properties of officially being associated with the Olympic movement. Yet, this shows that even in times of depression, the American capitalist system recognized the sponsorship potential of the Olympic Games, perhaps even before the IOC did.

When Pierre De Coubertin revived the Olympic movement his vision was to revive art and cultural competitions as well and indeed during the first half of the Twentieth Century, in every Olympic Games between Stockholm 1912 and London 1948, art, culture, music, literature, painting, sculpture and architecture were part of the Olympic program (Stromberg, 2012). Since the 1950s, the art competitions were replaced by art exhibitions and artistic programs during the Olympic Games. Until today, culture and art are celebrated in each Olympic Games through the Opening Ceremony, the Closing Ceremony and the various cultural activities which are called the Cultural Olympiad (Garcia, 2011). The opening and closing ceremonies gradually became a platform where countries could expose their culture and heritage as well (Arning, 2013).

Yet, when discussing the role of country image in the modern Olympic Games, one of the first to truly make a significant use of the games to change the image of the country was Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party, while hosting the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin (Dubinsky, 2017; Murray, 1992). The games were used for Arian propaganda and show the German people, foreign athletes and spectators how powerful and organized Germany could be under the governance of Hitler and his Party (Davis, 2008; Guttmann, 2002; Murray, 2008). Every German victory was perceived as a victory for the Arian race, "Heil Hitler" salutes were made during the flashing opening ceremony and Germany exposed their new developed technology by National Television Broadcasting for the first time. More traditions were introduced, such as the lighting of the torch in Olympia and the relay to the Olympic Stadium was done in the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin (Guttmann, 2002; Murray, 2008). The Games played a key role in the establishment of Hitler and the Nazi Party as the leaders of Germany. Hitler was not the only, nor the first dictator to use sport events to reaffirm his governance. Benito Mussolini used the 1934 FIFA World Cup to promote fascism and the superiority of Italy under his regime (Murray, 2018). Before Italy's semi-final and final matches, Mussolini even met the referee, thus securing Italy will win the cup on home soil. Later on, in 1978, the generals Junta regime in Argentina used controversial tactics to win the FIFA World cup that the country was hosting.

Nazi Germany managed to use the 1936 Berlin Olympics to promote their propaganda and tried to show international stakeholders a friendly peace-seeking country (Boykoff, 2016). Yet, the hero of the Games was black American athlete Jesse Owens, who won four gold medals, refuting the racist Arian on Hitler's home soil. Owens became a symbol not only for his sportive accomplishments against the Nazi regime, but for suffering from racism in the United States of America (USA), not even being able to ride the bus in America after coming back as a national hero. "I wasn't invited to shake hands with Hitler, but I wasn't invited to the White House to shake hands with the President", he told years after (Schwartz, 2000). During World War II (1939-1945) the Olympic Games that were scheduled in 1940 and 1944 were cancelled (Guttmann, 2002). In this period country image, with the Olympic Movement establishing its role as an international event, blunt manifestations of international relations (Dubinsky, 2017) started to appear and showed that hosing and participating countries recognize the potential for using the Olympic Games for country image purposes.

The political era

Since the end of World War II, countries have been using the Olympic Games for political purposes, to rebuilt their cities, infrastructure and technologies, and achieve national and international goals (Dubinsky, 2018; 2019). With the world being dominated by two superpowers and with new countries receiving independence, the International Olympic Committee became more international, and more countries saw opportunities through hosting and participating in the Olympic Games to showcase themselves on an international stage (Dubinsky, 2018; Guttmann, 2002). For most of the second half of the Twentieth Century, the ideal idea of De Coubertin of amateurism was facing a very hard and contradicting reality. During the Decades after World War II, the peaceful idea of the Olympic Games was clouded by International Politics that threatened the existence of the Games. Germany and its allies were excluded from the first Games after the war that took place in London in 1948 (Guttmann, 2002). Israel declared independence a few months before the Games but was not invited for

technical reasons as the country didn't have a recognized National Olympic Committee and after Arabic countries threatened to boycott the Olympics if Israel would participate. The Israeli-Arab dispute will continue to manifest itself through the next decades with boycotts, and even terror, using the Games as a platform to showcase their political agendas (Dubinsky & Dziku, 2018). In 1952 Israel participated for the first time, but East Germany boycotted the games after the IOC did not recognize the independence of the country.

Boycotts continued through the 1956 Games in Melbourne. Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon boycotted the games (Davis, 2008) because of the English involvement in the Suez Canal, China boycotted the Olympics because Taiwan was allowed to participate and during the Games the Soviet Army invaded Hungary, which resulted in Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland withdrawing in protest. With the Hungarian Revolution in the background, the water polo match in Melbourne between Hungary and USSR was remembered by the red bloody water due to the constant fighting and violent behavior game, especially by the Soviet players (Boykoff, 2016; Guttmann, 2002).

The Cold War between the Western Bloc led by the USA and the Eastern Bloc led by the Soviet Union provoked both blocs to try and show their superiority by developing elite athletes, using drugs steroids and performance enhancers (Hunt, 2007). The problem of doping became evident to all when Danish cyclist Knud Enemark Jensen collapsed during his race under the influence of Ronicol and died in the hospital. Countries recognized the potential to achieve international exposure through winning gold medals, having the anthem played, their flag raised and being recognized as an athletic powerhouse. Through the 1970s and the 1980s doping became an evident problem in the Olympic movement, as East Germany used a systematic doping system to achieve international recognition by dominating competitions in the swimming pool and in track and field (Dubinsky, 2017; Guttmann, 2002). More recent reports indicated that systematic governmental backing doping took place in West Germany as well during the 1970s (The Associated Press, 2013).

After World War II countries used the games to renovate destroyed cities and to try and change their images. Italy tried to disassociate itself with its fascist history, and prior to the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome monuments praising Mussolini were revamped (Boykoff, 2016). The Olympic movement also became more international, with more continents hosting the games. Japan became the first Asian country to host the Olympic Games in 1964 in Tokyo. Although China, Indonesia and North Korea boycotted the Games (Davis, 2008), Japan managed to use the Tokyo Olympics to shift the image from a post war country that suffered from two nuclear bombs only 20 years ago, to show the world a peaceful developed country using high technology such as satellite broadcasting for the first time. By using the Olympic Games to showcase its new technology, Japan managed to reposition itself and became recognized as a highly developed country. Japan became a market leader and continued to host high profile sports events, such as the Winter Olympic Games in 1972 (Sapporo) and 1998 (Nagano), the FIFA World Cup together with South Korea in 2002 and won the bid to host the Olympic Games again in Tokyo 2020.

Mexico used the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games to fight the stereotype of being undeveloped by having the games broadcasted live in color for the first time. During a protest against social injustice in Mexico City, just a few days before the Opening Ceremony, hundreds of students were killed by Mexican authorities in what became known as the Tlateloco Massacre (Guttmann, 2002). The 1960 Olympic Games in Rome were the first ones that the TV rights were sold for 1.2 Million dollars. Since then the rights fees have been increasing significantly in every games reaching billions of dollars (IOC, 2018).

With the growth of exposure, agenda setting and framing theories became relevant when analyzing the use of Olympic Games to shape an international image by different stakeholders (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Yoo, Smith & Kim, 2015). The increasing international coverage made the Olympic Games a useful platform not only for countries to achieve international goals, but also for pressure groups and individuals to impact the images of their own countries through protests (Dubinsky, 2017; IOC, 2018). It was also during the Games in Mexico when the most famous political protest was done by athletes, when American black medalists Tommie

Smith and John Carlos lowered their heads and raised their fists while standing on the podium during the American National Anthem in protest against racial discrimination in the United States (Boykoff, 2016; Guttman, 2002). While the athletes were sent home and scrutinized in the USA, decades later they became national heroes in America and inspired new generations of athletes to take a stand against social injustice.

While Japan managed to shift its image from a hawkish country to a peaceful one during the 1964 Games, the West German attempt in 1972 backfired. West Germany tried to organize "The Happy Games" in Munich and to give the world a complete different experience than the 1936 Berlin Games and show a very different Germany (Dubinsky, 2017; Guttman, 2002). Instead of armed soldiers marching and patrolling, unarmed security guards were in charge of the order. The result was a tragic terror attack by Palestinian Terror group "Black September", who kidnapped and murdered 11 Israeli athletes, coaches and referees (Dubinsky, 2017). It took Germany 34 more years until they managed to get it right. After suffering from a militant image in 1936 and from criticism about the lack of security in 1972, Germany showed the world a different, happy, developed and safe during the 2006 FIFA World Cup, making it a celebration in the stadiums, the host cities and all around the country (Murray, 2018; Sark, 2006).

From a county image perspective, the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal were a political and an economical disaster for Canada and Quebec (Whitson 2004). More than 20 African countries boycotted the games as a protest against the decision to allow New Zealand to participate after they played a rugby match against South Africa that was suspended from Olympic Movement because of the discriminating Apartheid regime (Dubinsky, 2017). The Games also left a huge debt as the Quebec government did not receive the support from the Federal Canadian government and tried to use the 1976 games to promote Quebec and Montreal (Dubinsky, 2017). The result was corruption and over spending of public money on the Olympic Stadium, and a debt that was covered only in 2006, 30 years after the Olympics (O'Reilly & Seguin, 2009). It was also the first and only Summer Olympic Games where the host country has failed to win a gold medal on home soil.

The peak of the tension cold war was in the 1980's as countries from the Western bloc and from the Soviet Union used the Olympic Games for public diplomacy to achieve international goals and to showcase their power (Murray, 2018). The 1980 Winter Olympic Games in Lake Placid in New York State, are mostly remembered by "The Miracle on Ice" (Billings, 2009), when the young college based American team beat the "Mighty Red" USSR ice hockey team in what was considered one of the biggest wins in US sport history. Yet, while USSR did come to compete in the USA, when Moscow hosted the summer Olympic Games in 1980, the Western Bloc, led by the USA boycotted the games as a protest against the invasion of the Soviet army to Afghanistan (Davis, 2008; Murray, 2018). Four years later, in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, the Soviet Union retaliated with a boycotting the games in the USA (Davis, 2008; Murray, 2018). With politics, terrorism and financial deficits and doping overshadowing sports, the future of the Olympic Games was at risk.

Research on country image is traced back to the 1970s and the use of public diplomacy as a foreign policy strategy is associated with the Cold War (Cull, 2008). Thus, it is not surprising that the two biggest superpowers and its allies, identified sports and especially the Olympic Movement as a tool to reach international goals and especially to improve the country's image. The political use of the Olympic Games became more sophisticated, with countries using both hard power and soft power (Dubinsky, 2017; Nye, 2008) to achieve foreign policy goals through the Olympic Movement. Through the political period, big countries, small countries, democratic and non-democratic countries, communities, non-governmental organizations and private citizens, all see the potential of using the Olympic Games to improve their images (Dubinsky, 2017; 2019; Murray, 2018). Through the lenses of agenda-setting and theories from communications studies (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Yoo, Smith & Kim, 2015), the period is also identified by attempts to capitalize on the exposure of the Olympic Games to achieve an image that serves political goals.

The commercialized era

The commercialized era brought a new dimension to country image – aiming not only to improve the political image but to have a long last successful financial impact (Davis, 2008; Dubinsky, 2017). With the Cold War coming to an end, new countries becoming independent, the capitalist financial system establishing itself as the predominant economic system and the USA left as the only superpower, the way countries used the Olympic Games in the late 1980s and 1990s was shifted from being mostly politically oriented, to being market oriented (Dubinsky, 2017). After three very problematic Olympic Games in Munich, Montreal and Moscow, the Olympic Movement was in a crossroad. President Juan Antonio Samaranch came into office after the 1980 Moscow Games, understanding the Olympic movement must go through another reform. The 1984 Olympic Games were significant not only because of political reasons. It was the first the Olympic Games were funded by the private sector and used existing facilities which led to an operational profit (Davis, 2008). The result was a flashy production of what became known as the "Hollywood Olympic Games" (Dubinsky, 2017), funded by private companies, and although being boycotted by Soviet countries, became a commercialized success (Davis, 2008). Private sponsorship and especially the TOP program that was established in 1985 changed the face Olympic Movement.

Very much like the 1964 Olympics in Japan, the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul were the coming out party of South Korea. The Asian country showed the world advanced technology and used the 1988 Seoul Olympics to reposition itself from a country that was recovering from a civil war, to a market leader in Asia (Kang & Perdue, 1994). North Korea boycotted the 1988 Olympics. The impact of the major sports events continues on South Korea continued in the Twenty-First Century as well. In 2002 Japan and South Korea have shown how much they have developed and how technologically advanced they are, by hosting the FIFA World Cup (Lee et al., 2009). South Korea hosted the World Championship in Athletics in 2014 and in 2018 joined the prestigious group of countries who hosted both summer and winter games, after hosting successful Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang in 2018. South Korea and North Korea had several joint activities during the winter games including a joint women's hockey team, showing that sports can be a platform to build bridges between communities even in sensitive times.

The 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona had an opposite impact than the 1976 Montreal Games. Although Barcelona is the capital of the Catalan region in Spain that seeks independence, the national government of Spain supported the games and helped Barcelona to re-build itself, renovate the city's infrastructure and make the bay area a tourist attraction (Belloso, 2011). The result was that a city that was ranked number 16 in Europe became the third most attractive tourist destination in the continent (Davis, 2008). Unlike in Montreal, where the federal Canadian government objected the way Quebec hosted the games, in 1992, the Spanish supported Barcelona, which became a counter example to Montreal, of how a country can use Olympic Games and create a positive and sustainable legacy. These were also the first fully professional Olympic Games, dominated by American basketball icons such as Michael Jordan, Ervin Magic Johnson, Larry Bird and the other members of "The Dream Team".

The Atlanta Games in 1996, celebrating 100 years to the revival of the modern Olympic Games, were an attempt by the United States to brand Atlanta as a new world city. Former Heavyweight Champion in boxing Mohamed Ali (and Olympic Champion in Rome 1960), who was protested against racial discrimination in the USA and refused to be drafted to the Vietnam War, light the Olympic Torch in the Opening Ceremony. Although the offices of big global corporations such as Coca Cola and CNN are based in Atlanta and Atlanta is a business center, it was never perceived as culturally attractive as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Moreover, two people were killed and 111 were injured by a car bomb in a terror attack in the Centennial Olympic Park. The Atlanta 1996 received the nickname of the "Coca Cola Olympics" based on the global corporations in Georgia, making them another symbol of the commercialized era. The games were even criticized for being too commercialized (Davis, 2008).

The growing revenues from TV rights and through the TOP sponsors started a gift giving culture that threatened to corrupt the Olympic Movement (Booth, 1999). The scandals broke out in the bids for the 2000 Olympic Games and for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, when that several IOC members received expensive gifts to vote for the winning bids of Sydney and Salt Lake City respectively (Davis, 2008). The result was a complete reform in the IOC, the membership of the corrupted IOC members was revoked and new strict rules were made about who can become an IOC member and the relations they can have with the bidding cities.

Through the political and commercial era the Olympic Games gradually neglected the idea of amateurism (Dubinsky, 2017). Money, politics and professionalism were part of the Olympic Movement, but after the very difficult periods in the 60's, 70's and 80's, not only the Olympic Games were saved, but their future was secure. Countries saw the Olympic Games as a tool not only for public diplomacy purposes, but also to improve create an economic impact and improve their positioning to be associated as a developed countries and global leaders. The two predominant approaches in place branding research are tourism based that focus on branding the country as a tourism destination and product based, that focus on associating countries with products (Dubinsky, 2018). Through the political era and the commercialized era, countries identified ways of how to use the Olympic Games for these purposes. The growing impact on TV coverage and the role of private sponsorships, gave countries opportunities to be associated with the Olympic movement and expose their products internationally. The American dominance as a world hegemon (Dubinsky, 2017) reflected also in its influence in the IOC revenues (IOC, 2018) through TOP sponsors such as Visa and Coca-Cola and ever growing TV rights deals led mostly by NBC (IOC, 2018) which positioned the USA as the most dominant country in the Olympic movement at the end of the Twentieth-Century. Through the commercialized era was a celebration of the capitalist world, where countries shifted from focusing how to use the Olympic Games for political goals to focus on commercial ones, generating revenues and improving tourism. Nation branding, and the use of the Olympic Games to improve tourism or showcase products associated with certain countries (Anholt, 2010; Fan, 2010), became a predominant leading goal through this period, for countries using the Olympic Games for nation branding purposes.

The legacy oriented era

In the Twenty-First Century, the commercialization of the Olympic Movement took a step forward and now each bidding city does not only focus on having an immediate positive financial impact but on the Games having a lasting long term legacy (Dubinsky, 2017). Yet this step brought also much criticism and concern regarding the long-term profitability of the Olympic Games for countries and communities (Dubinsky, 2017). Australia used the 2002 Olympic Games to develop Sydney, making it one of the leading cities in the country and the continent. Since the Sydney 2000 bid, every bidding city must include an Olympic Education program in their bid. According to Anholt (2010, p. 63) hosting Olympic Games and other mega sports events “can be a highly effective way of communicating warmth and depth of national character”. Anholt (2010, p. 63) specially mentioned the role of the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney “in helping to create the strong affection which people around the world feel for the Australians today”. Moreover, a message of peace was shown when South Korea and North Korea marched in the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games under the same Korean Unification flag. Yet the optimism from the commercial era, faced a harsh reality as the Olympic Games started to become a financial burden on the hosting country. The Salt Lake City Olympic Games in 2002, signified not only corruption in the Olympic movement, but also another bump in security costs (Boyle, Clement & Heggerty, 2014; Coakley, 2015), taking place only months after the 2001 September 11 terror attacks on US soil. While the terror attack in Munich during the 1972 Olympic Games made security a concern for hosting countries, since the terror attacks of 9/11, the security costs of hosting Olympic Games increased to even billions making security another financial burden for hosting countries (Boyle, Clement & Heggerty, 2014; Boykoff, 2016). The Athens 2004 Olympics were used by the Greek government not only to show the world the history

of the Olympic Games and the mythology around it, but also as an opportunity to renovate roads, renovate the airport and build an underground train system (Fola, 2011). Yet, the Olympic Games in Athens are also characterized by public spending, facilities and venues that were barely ready on time (Davis, 2008) that later on became burdens on taxpayers.

Two different philosophies of hosting Olympic Games were used during the first decade and a half of the century (Dubinsky, 2018). The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games that were used by totalitarian regimes as a demonstration of power, and the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games and the 2012 London Olympic Games, that were used by western democracies focusing on sustainability and community involvement. China saw the 2008 Olympic Games as an opportunity to reposition itself from a developing country to a powerhouse, and spared no expenses doing so (Preuss, 2008). The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games were the most expensive summer games in history with an estimated cost of more than 44 billion USD. China renovated the airport and built new facilities such as the aquatics center The Water Cube and the Olympic Stadium, The Bird's Nest, that are hardly used after the games and stands as a white elephant (Dubinsky, 2018). China tried to open up to the western world, and to expose the Chinese culture from the design of the Olympic Torch, through the opening ceremony and during the games. Thus, both democratic and non-democratic countries have been using the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games as a soft power tool (Nye, 2008) to expose their culture and values (Arning, 2013). The 2008 Olympic Games also exposed China to global criticism about Tibet, human rights violations, relocation of poor population, the air pollution in Beijing and other negative aspects. Since the Beijing Olympics, China hosted the IAAF Athletics World Championship in Shanghai, the Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing and Beijing won the bid to host the Winter Olympic Games in 2022. Through the first decades of the Twenty-First Century, Chinese companies such as Lenovo and Alibaba also saw potential in the Olympic movement, becoming TOP partners (IOC, 2018), contributing to the branding of China as a global technological powerhouse.

The 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games were the Olympic redemption for Canada. After failing to win a gold medal in both the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games and the 1988 Calgary Olympic Games, Canada finished first in the gold medal table. Unlike the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games that left a debt that was covered only in 2006, it took Vancouver one year after the Games to break even, while establishing itself as a global city. Both were a result of public and private initiatives and programs to leave a better legacy for Canada such as Own the Podium (Boykoff, 2016) and Paint the Town Red (Burton & O'Reilly, 2016). Yet, there was also internal protests and criticism by activists in Canada about building facilities for the Olympic Games on land owned by Native Americans (Boykoff, 2016). Also, just before the Games started a Georgian athlete Nodar Kumaritashvili died in training. IOC president Jacques Rogge described this tragedy as the worst moment of his presidency. The Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games started to integrate social media and especially Twitter and Facebook (Miah & Jones, 2012) promoting the openness of Canada.

Social media platforms were only making their first steps in the Olympic Movement (Fernández Peña, 2011). The Youth Olympic Games, arguably the main legacy of former IOC President Jacques Rogge, were held for the first time in the summer of 2010 in Singapore and the first winter edition in Innsbruck in 2012, trying to approach young audiences through social media as well. The Youth Olympic Games also gave smaller countries who cannot afford to host the Olympic Games a chance to host Olympic sanctioned competitions, thus be associate with the Five Rings. In London 2012 the integration of social media was complete and much of the success of the Games was through the constant engagement through various social media platforms (Miah, 2012). The London 2012 official Facebook, Twitter and Google + sites attracted 4.7 million followers, having 150 million tweets about the games (IOC Communications, 2013) making them the real first "Social Media Olympics" (Miah, 2012).

Unlike Beijing, London did not need the Olympic Games to introduce itself to the world, as it was already a global city that hosted the Games twice before in 1908 and 1948 (Dubinsky, 2018). The English capital used

the 2012 Olympic Games to renovate the poor Stratford area in East London and to include minorities in the work force while promoting British Pride in Great Britain (MacRury & Poynter, 2010), two years before the referendum for Scotland's independence where Scotland decided not to separate from the United Kingdom. The emphasize was on having sustainable green Olympics (London Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Ltd. 2012), cleaning the polluted Lee Valley, improving Stratford area, while hosting the Games in temporary venues or venues that will be used by the public after and will not become a burden on taxpayers. The rich British impact on the Olympic movement was also celebrated during the London Olympic and Paralympic Games as the two mascots, Welcock and Mandeville were named after Much Wenlock where Dr. Brooks started the Much Wenlock Games and after Stock Mandeville, where Dr. Ludwig Guttmann started the Paralympic Movement (Polley 2011).

Much like the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, Russia and President Vladimir Putin wanted to use the 2014 Winter Olympic Games to show a powerful strong country, and much like Beijing 2008 there was much controversy around the Games regarding spending unprecedented amount of public money and protest about human rights violations. The estimated cost of the 2014 Sochi Olympics was reported over 50 Billion USD (Boykoff, 2016) and were surrounded by controversies about corruption and various human rights violations. The Sochi Olympics were criticized internationally, yet there were no political incidents while they were going on. During the Paralympic Winter Games that followed, the Russian Army invaded Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula (Murray, 2018). Following the Sochi Olympic Games, evidence of systematic doping were found in Russian sports and Russian athletes and sports federations were suspended from competing in several international sports events (Murray, 2018). In the following Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang, Russian athletes did not march under their national flag but competed under the Olympic Athletes of Russia delegation with the Olympic flag. The suspensions, sanctions and international scrutiny did not prevent Russia from continuing to use sports for nation branding purposes, hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2018.

With sustainability and green Olympics at one end of the sphere and with countries wanting to use the exposure of the Olympic Games to improve their international image, different regimes will continue to bid and have interest to host the Games. Brazil, a developing country that hosted the 2014 FIFA World Cup under local protest, hosts the 2016 Olympic Games with the goal of becoming new market leader. However, because of a financial and political crisis in Brazil Rio de Janeiro did not manage to use the 2016 Olympic Games to position the city as the most important city in South America, but just managed to survive the organization (Dubinsky, 2017). Thus, while Rio de Janeiro promised to hold sustainable games, the games did not result in a positive legacy (Boykoff & Mascarenhas, 2016). The Tokyo 2020 bid focused on sustainability through renovating the country from the 2011 Tsunami and Earthquake disasters and on showcasing advanced Japanese technologies. Yet despite having a very detailed sustainability plan, the Tokyo 2020 also faced sustainability threats regarding the safety of fans and athletes (Denyer, 2019; McCurry, 2019). In 2019 over 40 percent of the athletes who competed in the women's marathon in the IAAF Championship that was held in Doha, Qatar, did not finish the race due to the heat conditions. Qatar who won the bid to host both the 2019 IAAF Championship and the 2022 World Cup in very controversial way and facing constant criticism for human rights violations and corruption, aimed to host the Olympic Games as well.

The threat of gigantism and the lack of involvement of local community in the bidding process and in the hosting of the games, resulted in Democratic countries like Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Sweden and Norway, either not bidding or withdrawing their bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, leaving Beijing and Almaty from Kazakhstan as the only final bids. Recognizing future challenges of the Olympic Movement, one of Bach's first major acts as the president of the IOC was to divide the member into working groups and come up with Agenda 2020: 40 recommendations about the future of the Olympic Movement (International Olympic Committee, 2014), including more flexible ways in the bid process. The bid for the 2024 Olympic Games also resulted with most of the candidates withdrawing, leaving only Paris and Los Angeles as the only candidate cities. The IOC recognized the problem and the opportunities, awarding the 2024 Games to the French Capital and the 2028

Olympic Games to the Americans. Another example of change in the bidding process was in the bid for the 2026 Winter Olympic Games as the two finalists had joint bids, with an Italian bid of Milano and Cortina selected over a Swedish bid of Stockholm and Åre (Burns, 2019).

One method for country image that did not change since the ancient competitions in Greece, is the role of the athletes as ambassadors (Georgiadis, 2003). From Jesse Owens who defined the Nazi regime in 1936; Abebe Bikila's barefoot marathon victory in Rome 1960 and the legacy of long running in Africa; Nadia Comaneci and Romanian gymnastics breaking records and barriers in Montreal 1976; and Usain Bolt and Jamaican sprinters in the Twenty-First Century, big and small saw and continue to see the Olympic Games as a platform to put the spotlight on their culture and history through athletic success (Boykoff 2016; Guttmann, 2002; Murray 2018). With national pride and international goals at stake, trying to take short cuts through different methods of doping and cheating, and by speedy nationalizing athletes, became common practices in almost every recent Olympic Games (Boykoff, 2016; Coakley, 2015; Dubinsky, 2018; Murray, 2018). Countries and communities are cautious and skeptical about the way the Olympic Games can impact their images (Dubinsky, 2017). The third decade of the Twenty-First Century might signal if the Olympic movement is still focusing on legacy or will be starting a new Olympic era where countries will be targeting other opportunities to use the games to improve their images.

Conclusion

The naked athletics competitions held in Ancient Olympia started as a religious festival and were based on a mythological horse race that was won by bribery (Miller, 2004a). Yet those competitions embodied some of the foundations of the human society almost 3,000 years later. Concepts of national traditions, local pride and certain equalities that without them Democracy could thrive, were part of those Greek competitions. The Ekecheiria, the sacred Olympic truce, was one of the most respected Pan-Hellenic traditions. The modern Olympic Games that were founded on some of those ancient traditions as competitions for amateurs are very different than the ones Pierre De Coubertin dreamt on.

Towards of the second decade of the Twenty-First Century every country in the world is involved with the Olympic Movement and every region and territory in the world is exposed to the Olympic Movement (IOC, 2018). Countries, communities and non-governmental organizations are targeting the Olympic Games, trying to reach local, national and international goals. The Olympic Games are getting bigger and with the ever technological development of media and social media, they reach larger population. But with the growth of the Games, come bigger resistance, protests from local communities and various activists groups causing countries and cities to drop bids or to reject hosting future Olympic Games (Boykoff, 2016; Dubinsky, 2017).

This article identified different periods through the Modern Olympic Movement that had a common link that applies to country image and that can be analyzed through some related fields of research. Every era discussed in this study is influenced by the previous era. Dividing the periods is of course subjective and socially influenced. Moreover, there are overlaps between the periods. Aspects of legacy could be found in the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games during the commercialized era, political impact of course could be found in the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games before the political era, the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles apply both the political era and the commercialized era and many other examples and anecdotes could be given. Yet, the significance of this study is to show a systematic continuation in how countries used the Olympic Games to improve their image and through the suggested periods this study illustrates and analyzes that. Country image is multidisciplinary (Fan, 2010), influenced by fields of research such as sociology, political science, business management and communications (Buhmann & Inghoff, 2015). Through these lenses, countries and communities have been using the Olympic Games for to improve their images and reach local, national and international goals.

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Life Skill Development and Transfer beyond Sport

Authors' contribution:

- A) conception and design of the study
- B) acquisition of data
- C) analysis and interpretation of data
- D) manuscript preparation
- E) obtaining funding

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to investigate the current life skills education programs offered by the Australian Football League (AFL) for elite footballers in order to determine the retention of life skill knowledge and transfer beyond sport. Life skill education in sport is an increasing phenomenon. Life skills sport programs are capable of delivering positive outcomes when nurtured through a deliberately designed curriculum and purposeful teaching strategies. However, it is not known how life skills are learned and importantly what the impact of life skills education on long term behavioural changes is. It is apparent from the literature that there is a need to identify how knowledge is acquired and importantly retained through life skills education programs. This was a qualitative research project from a life history perspective. Twenty footballers who had been delisted from an elite Australian football club and had subsequently returned to a South Australian state-based football club took part in semi-structured interviews. The data was analysed through an inductive thematic analysis. Two themes emerged from the data: football related development and holistic development. It was clear that football clubs placed importance on the development of life skills that transfer beyond the sport. However, given the footballers in this research have not fully transferred into life after sport, their perception of the broader transferability of their life-skill development beyond sport is limited. This research concludes that the current format of life skill education (delivering content) that the players in this study were exposed to was not effective because the players failed to be able to make connections from the program to life outside of football. Therefore, the programs are unlikely to have any long-term benefit to player health and well-being during their post-elite football life.

KEYWORDS

Australian football, Life-skills, Education, Life history, knowledge transfer

Introduction

This paper reports on the findings of a project investigating the life skills development of players occurring in the sport of Australian football from the perspective of the players. Life skills can be defined as the skills required to deal with the demand and challenges of everyday life (Holt, Tamminen, Tink & Black, 2009). Effective life skills programs ensure transfer of knowledge and the development of positive behaviours such as assertiveness, self-awareness, decision making, communication, problem solving, and critical and innovative thinking (Nasheeda, Abdullah, Krauss & Ahmed, 2018). Many of the existing programs are implemented based on the value of life skill components. Frequently programs are developed to cover particular content, and little

importance is given to designing life skills programs based on sound teaching and learning principles (Nasheeda et al., 2018).

While life skills education programs are increasingly popular throughout the world of sport there remains a lack of information about the effectiveness of these programs in influencing long term, sustainable change for the participants (Nasheeda et al., 2018). There is a need to address the general lack of understanding of how life skills are learned and importantly the impact of life skills education on long term behavioural changes. It is apparent from the literature that there is a need to identify how knowledge is acquired and importantly retained through life skills education programs. Recently Debois, Ledon and Wylleman (2015) identified further research on athlete development at different domains of development including vocational development is needed.

Life skills education in elite professional sport

Life skills education is an increasingly popular phenomenon in adult sport settings, including elite sport. This is largely in response to the intense competitive pressures faced by elite athletes and the growing concern for individuals' health and well-being as they develop their career while trying to maintain a balance between life on and off the field (Manzini & Gwandure, 2011; Pink, Saunders & Stynes, 2015). In the Australian football context, research suggests that allowing for the dual career development of footballers is important and may facilitate both player well-being and on-field performance (Pink et al., 2015). In addition, Pink et al., (2015) argued that football clubs have an ethical responsibility to support the development of dual careers to assist players find meaning in life beyond the sport. Dual career refers to "the challenge of combining a sporting career with studies or work, which remains a source of concern for most high-performance athletes" (Ryba et al. 2015, p. 125).

Life skills programs in professional sport settings are frequently associated with post sporting career options preparing the player for life after sport (Anderson, 2012; Hickey & Kelly, 2008). The Positive Transitions Model for Sport Retirement (Meker, Stankovitch & Kays, 2000; Stankovitch, Meeker & Henderson, 2001), the Career Assistance Program for Athletes (Petitpas, Danish, McKelvain & Murphy, 1992), the Strategies program (Coleman & Barker, 1991), Going for Goal (Danish, 1997; Danish et al., 1992a, 1992b), Project Ithuseng (Draper, Forbes, Taylor & Lambert, 2012), and the Life Development Intervention (Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1993) are examples of these programs. Life skills programs in adult sport settings have been shown to improve the morale and performance of players (Manzini, 2012) in addition to developing inter- and intra-personal skills. However, there is a lack of research into the continuing effects of these programs beyond the sporting context.

This study looks specifically at Australian Footballers' experiences with the MAX 360 developed by the AFL Player's Association (AFLPA). MAX 360 offers individualised development action plans for both on and off the field. The program aims to simplify the tracking of a player's career and maximise individual growth in all areas of their life (Fillipou, 2014). Through conversations with player, club and industry the aim of the program is an off-field development action plan to direct players' development path towards industry in a meaningful and targeted manner (Fillipou, 2014). The MAX 360 program contains the following components: "Getting organised (implementing personal and professional self-management skills); Learning and Growth (engaging in appropriate educational or work experience programs); Financial Ownership (understanding basic financial management and future proofing); Personal Brand (identifying personal values and strengths and displaying these to others) and; Resilience and Thriving (building skills, knowledge and networks to become resilient, manage stress, and bounce back or know where to get help when needed)" (International Sports Care, 2019).

According to Martinek and Lee (2012), knowledge of whether the life skills transfer from the sport setting where the programs are implemented to other parts of the participants' life often remains disconnected from descriptions of the programs. This disconnection is often because transfer from the educational context in the sport settings is not an explicit concern of the program provider. This disconnect potentially affects the efficacy

of the programs because the transfer from the program offered in the sport setting to life outside of football is not established (Gould & Westfall, 2013).

We believe that the designers of sport based education programs should proceed with consideration of Danish, Taylor, and Fazio's (2003) recommended four teaching strategies for sport-based life skills programs focused on transfer: 1. Instructors discuss how the life skills taught in the program link to sport performance; 2. Instructors provide participants with examples of how the life skills can be used in 'real life' settings; 3. Instructors provide participants with opportunities to practice the life skills presented in their sport setting before then assisting in helping the participants create plans for using these skills in contexts outside the sports club setting; and 4. Instructors debrief with participants on their successful and unsuccessful life skills application in sport and life 'beyond the club'. In summary, life skills sport programs are capable of delivering positive outcomes when nurtured through a deliberately designed curriculum and purposeful teaching strategies (Camiré, Trudel & Forneris, 2012; Teck Koh & Camiré, 2015).

Methodology

The aim of this research was to explore the current life skills education programs offered by the AFL for elite footballers from the perspective of players who had been in the AFL system. The research questions were:

- 1) What are the opportunities for life skills development in elite Australian football?
- 2) To what extent is the life skills education knowledge transferrable beyond sport?

Theoretical framework

This was a qualitative research study from a life-history perspective, specifically, a stage in a life cycle approach. The life history approach is part of narrative inquiry, which provides an avenue for the telling of people's stories in order to understand their experiences within specific places or situations (Creswell, 2012; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Stage in a life cycle approaches (which can be captured through a life history approach) are underutilised in sport career transition research (Gordon & Lavallee, 2012). Investigation of athlete experiences through stage in a life cycle approaches have been argued as being a useful addition to the current literature on sports transitions (Gordon & Lavallee, 2012). Adopting a stage in a life cycle approach is one way that this paper adds value to the extant literature in sport life skills education.

The footballers who took part in this study chose to return to state based leagues rather than leave sport entirely, therefore, they have not yet fully transitioned into life after sport. This reflects Coakley's (2006) and Kelly and Hickey's (2008) assertion that retirement from sport can be viewed as a process rather than a single moment for many players.

Participants

Sample sizes in life history research tend to be relatively small to allow for the focus to be on the richness of the data (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Ten footballers aged between 20 and 31 years of age took part in this study. All of the footballers had played in the elite AFL competition and had returned to play in the sub-elite and semi-professional South Australian National Football League (SANFL) state league competition following the end of their elite football careers. The footballers' careers in the AFL had lasted between 1 and 8 years. Two footballers had played over 100 games in the AFL, and three had not played a game in the elite competition while on an AFL team list.

All SANFL state league clubs were invited to participate in the research with three granting permission. Participants were sourced from those three clubs. The majority of the footballers (n=9) were forced into

retirement from the AFL competition through deselection (delisting) and 1 footballer chose to leave the AFL competition after contract negotiations did not conclude satisfactorily.

Following institutional ethics approval, participants were recruited purposefully (Patton, 2002) through the football managers in the SANFL clubs. The football managers were provided with an information letter detailing the study, which was then forwarded to the footballers in their clubs who had played in the national AFL competition. Following receipt of the information letter, participants were able to contact the researchers directly to indicate their interest in the study.

Procedures

Participants took part in a semi-structured interview which lasted between 28-60 minutes. The length of the interview was dependent on the comfort level of the participant with the topics and the level of self-reflection they felt was necessary (Polkinghorne, 1989). A semi-structured interview guide was utilised to ensure similar questions were asked of participants, however, the procedure also allowed for the interview to be directed by participants' responses (Patton, 1990). Each interview explored topics including what induction programs the footballers were involved in, what additional programs they completed throughout their career and what information they continue to use since retiring from elite level football.

Analysis

As qualitative research, thematic analysis of the data was appropriate. Thomas and Harden's (2008) three step inductive thematic analysis process was used to analyse the data. This involved the individual transcripts initially being coded line by line by two of the authors. Following the initial coding, the codes were grouped and refined until finally organised into descriptive themes. We then used a data synthesis approach to the analysis, to explore the themes within the context of the research questions (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

Trustworthiness

Creswell and Miller (2000) encourage using several of the nine strategies they outline for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research because "the emphasis of a study will vary depending on the project, the audience for whom we are writing, and the people available to provide an assessment of our project" (p. 129). This study incorporated peer review and an audit trail. As the focus in a stage of life approach to life history is on the richness of the data, thick, rich description was an important component in establishing the trustworthiness of this study. Through rich, thick descriptions the reader can gain a sense of what was experienced by participants, such that they might have experienced it themselves (Creswell & Miller, 2000). While the focus of qualitative research is not necessarily to generalise for all people, rich descriptions can assist in determining the transferability of the findings to other settings (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

To comply with Australian ethical guidelines, member checking was included in this study through participants being provided with a copy of their interview transcript and given two weeks to review and request changes if required. If no response was received within two weeks, the transcript was taken to be an accurate account of the interview. None of the participants requested any changes to their interview transcripts.

Peer review or peer debrief is the process of an external 'examiner' reviewing the research process and findings in order to provide critique and support for the researchers (Creswell & Miller, 2000). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the peer reviewer can enhance the quality of the research by asking the difficult questions regarding methods and interpretations. In this study, this involved the primary researcher maintaining regular contact with an established expert in football operations management to discuss the process and findings. Smith

and McGannon (2017) recommended this approach of utilising a critical friend during the reflective process rather than rely on inter-coder reliability.

Results and discussion

The data informing this paper forms part of a larger project on the transition experiences of elite Australian footballers who return to state-based leagues after their elite career has finished (Agnew, Marks, Henderson & Woods, 2018). The scope of this paper is limited to the concepts relating to the education and life skill development of footballers. Two themes emerged from the life history approach consideration of the data relating to the education and life skills development of footballers; football related development and holistic development. Each of these themes had several sub-themes which are discussed in detail below.

Football related development

It was clear that the AFL clubs provided many development opportunities for the footballers. Some of these include the development of life skills such as managing their finances and cooking meals, while other opportunities were related to alternative career development which was directly related to preparing them for life after sport (Saunders & Pink, 2014). However, the majority of guidance provided by the club related to the development of the men as footballers. Participants had access to nutritionists and fitness specialists to improve their performance, which had the potential to contribute to knowledge and skill development if retained beyond one's football career. However, it was also evident that the players football clubs may have competing interests between developing the men as footballers and developing them as people, which can be a barrier to life skill development opportunities and the guidance that is offered to footballers about life beyond football. These sub-themes are explored below.

Club guidance

This study found that a shift in the importance of nutrition related knowledge appears to have occurred in the past two decades as most players in the current study reported ease of access to anything to do with nutrition. This is contrary to Ebert (2000) who found that Australian footballers were less educated about food composition and practical cooking skills. Everything was provided by the football club, from meals at the club to compulsory nutrition consultations, and cooking classes. However, this focus on dietary practices was mainly directed at new players (years 1-4).

While the data revealed that many players thought free access to nutrition advice was a good initiative the data also suggested some individuals misinterpreted the sports nutrition advice provided by the club Dietitian. Notably, the specific nutrient knowledge reportedly focussed on protein for muscle hypertrophy, with some information about carbohydrates and (physical) performance, but very little on foods and nutrients for health and well-being as stated by this participant:

So yeah I was on protein powders and sorts of- so a lot of protein powders with the mass-gain, plus then with the meals you'd eat. Just pretty much force yourself to eat, as much as you can in terms like with chicken and meat and brown rice and stuff like that, just to sort of really get your fuel levels up. (participant 8)

The focus on protein consumption may have been selective self-interest by the players, and more extensive nutrition advice may have been provided. However, players reported only short-term goals for nutrition management, with a focus on current desired body weight or body composition, rather than long-term health as explained by this footballer:

No I just knew that eating protein and lots of it you actually get pretty big so that's all me and my house mate at the time- we were just 18 year olds and we were just trying to get big and we were eating heaps of food- carbohydrates and protein and just doing as many gym sessions as we could so that's all we were doing. (participant 2)

Adapting nutrient intake for current desired body weight or body composition is consistent with Jenner et al. (2018) who stated that particularly around body composition assessment times in the AFL season, footballers were not meeting the daily nutrient intake guidelines. Lohman et al. (2018) found that the majority of Australian footballers in their study over-consumed protein and under-consumed carbohydrate. The misunderstanding of nutrition advice revealed in our study is consistent with Lohman, Carr, and Condo (2018) and Trakman et al. (2018) who found that Australian footballers' sports nutrition knowledge was "poor".

Club guidance was particularly evident where football development was concerned. However, the requirement to participate in compulsory training or education and information sessions has the potential to lead to broader life skill development if the information is retained by the players. Many of the footballers in this research participated in the micro-credentialing (certificate short courses in a specified area) their football clubs were offering. Players repeatedly highlighted courses that were run through the football club, such as vocational education and training courses like certificate IV in fitness, certificates in coaching and business course management certificates. However, it was evident that the transferability of the life skills developed to areas outside of sport may not be recognised by the footballers. We are not suggesting that participating in the micro-credentialing enables the players to get jobs or become job ready. Rather the footballers in this study appeared to perceive the micro-credentialing they had completed at the club to not be useful beyond sport. This was because the courses offered at the club were frequently not aligned to the post-sport career ambitions of the players.

Many players felt once they had left the AFL system they were educationally and socially 'behind' their high school peers. The participants talked about leaving the AFL system without qualifications which made it difficult to find employment. The footballers reported that they "would have been at Uni straight away if I didn't get drafted" and that because they were only able to study part time that football had "put me behind a little bit." Consistent with Saunders and Pink (2014), the demands of football and therefore not having enough time, were also argued to prevent footballers from pursuing subsequent career paths which has now inhibited their opportunities as stated by this participant:

I wanted to become, do a trade of my own and be mature aged, straight away you can sort of get looked past, because they can employ someone 2 years younger, 3 years younger for a lot less. So I think yeah, that was a – my biggest sort of – upset about was the fact that I've potentially missed out on having my own career as a carpenter or a plumber or electrician, just because I couldn't do the time required when I was on the [football] list. (participant 8)

The players in this study are still playing sub-elite football and so therefore can be considered to have not yet fully transitioned into life after sport. However, at this stage of their life many of their peers of a similar age have finished post-compulsory education and are in the process of establishing their professional work careers or have established a career in the trades. Although the footballers have had opportunities to establish what would be considered dual careers, they are not seeing it. What they appear to be seeing is the finish of one career and the need to start again to establish a completely alternative career.

Consistent with previous findings (Danish et al, 2008; Holt et al., 2008; Martinek & Lee, 2012), the players in this study developed their life skills through the socialisation processes associated with being involved in football and they are still playing, therefore they do not seem to recognise the transferability of their life skills into a non-sporting context. While the sports clubs appear to place value on life skill education, from an athlete perspective there does not appear to be a transfer of knowledge beyond sport.

It is important to note that the perception of their AFL career putting them “behind” in terms of a subsequent career is pertinent to footballers who have been delisted and have not had long AFL careers. Having focussed on achieving a career in the AFL for much of their youth and early adulthood, the delisted footballers in this study often have not had the time to complete qualifications and forge an alternative career path (Agnew et al., 2018). Participants in this research argued that if their careers had been longer it would not feel like such a sacrifice in terms of future career opportunities. However, now being “unprepared” for life after football led to the perception they were “behind”, as highlighted by this participant:

I don't know just the way I sort of look at it now is I as soon as I was drafted I was way ahead of any of my friends in terms of yeah, setting myself up. The day I've been delisted it's sort of taken me 3 or 4 months now to realise that my friends are way far, way ahead of me. (participant 5)

Competing interests

It was evident that football clubs provided opportunities for the development of the footballers both on and off the field. However, it appeared that competing interests placed restrictions on what was permissible. This was particularly evident in terms of nutrition recommendations and off-field development. One of the constraints on football clubs is that they may be sponsored by nutrition focussed organisations. For example, the footballers in this research commented that because their club was sponsored by a particular company they were not permitted to “touch anything else” with regard to their nutrition supplementation. An all access report for a national education program on drugs (Bluestone Edge, 2013) argued some sports are concerned about the potential conflict of interest by having supplement companies sponsoring their high-performance programs. In this study, it appears the nutrition advice given to footballers may have been influenced by the need to maintain sponsor investment in the club.

While the majority of footballers perceived their clubs to be supportive of pursuing outside interests, in reality there were many restrictions placed on what they were allowed to do and what time they had available. Particularly in their first year at the club, while as new recruits they were required to do additional weights training sessions which meant attending the club on their rostered day off. The footballers agreed they were “happy” to do these sessions because they were there to play football, however, they also admitted the additional sessions could be a challenge to doing personal development activities, such as study:

In our first year it was sort of made compulsory for the first year players to come in and do extra weight sessions, which was, like I understand where they're coming from but again spending 7 days a week, 6-7 days a week at the club can be a bit much. (participant 8)

Restrictions were also placed on what outside interests could be pursued. The footballers highlighted their clubs were hesitant to allow them to follow an interest in trades which required extensive labour and had a high risk of injury. This might appear contrary to the research suggesting that having outside interests and therefore achieving more of a work life balance facilitates on field performance. It would seem to be in the clubs' best interests to promote footballers pursuing dual careers (Pink, et al., 2015). Nonetheless, given the restrictions placed on the footballers it is questionable whether the clubs really are promoting dual career possibilities or using outside interests as a tool to improve on field performance. We are not suggesting the clubs are not concerned with the holistic development of the players and some restrictions may be unavoidable. The challenge for clubs is how to work more meaningfully with players and their dual career development. Participants in this research stated they understood why these restrictions were put in place but felt this denied them the opportunity to pursue subsequent career paths they were interested in which meant they were not preparing for life after football. Typical of the responses is this quote:

I think yeah because the day off was a recovery day, so they didn't want you out working an 8 hour day slaving away on the tools. So yeah I can understand where they've come from there

*and it would have made life a lot harder, but as I said it sort of put you back a few steps.
(participant 8)*

Holistic development

The holistic development of footballers included mandatory induction programs when they first entered the AFL system as well as being involved in opportunities outside of football in order to prepare for life after football. The footballers recognised that having a good balance between football and outside interests was important but not knowing what they wanted to do along with the club restrictions on what they could do made finding the balance difficult. This supports Pink et al., (2015) who found that having a work/life balance was valued by players but that some declined to engage with dual careers because they needed time to consider their options. In the current study, there was a general sense that the mandatory induction programs were a component footballers needed to complete in order to ‘tick the boxes’ and begin their football career rather than being meaningful to them. However, it appears that that some nutrition knowledge is retained in life after football, therefore, there may be benefits of compulsory programs beyond the football field.

Ticking the boxes

It was clear through this research that the majority of footballers held little value for the compulsory induction programs ran by the AFL Players’ Association (AFLPA) at the start of their careers. Consistent with Agnew et al. (2018), the footballers in this study stated they were required to attend programs on respect and responsibility (gender equality), drugs and alcohol, managing money, mental health issues and racial vilification. Common sentiments about these programs included comments such as “*we did all of that, all the boring stuff with the AFLPA*” and “*each year players will have to do that and sign that off that they sat through it...*” Players admitted they did not want to complete these programs and the common perception was that they could use the time to “switch off” even though many realised that the reason these programs are compulsory is because the concerns addressed are still issues in the AFL and broader society. The following comment summarises the perception from the majority of participants in this research about the compulsory programs:

I was never really keen on doing [it] - I just wanted to play footy, but you’ve got to do these things and you try and switch off that period of time and then you tick it off, but there’s definitely a sense of just getting it done especially to a footballer but yeah. (participant 10)

Despite distributed learning being recommended over one off educational encounters to optimise long-term retention (Raman et al., 2010; Son & Simon, 2012; Turner, 2006), players in this study argued having to complete them each year was repetitive and not necessary because the programs were based on “common sense”. The footballers argued the program content had not changed during their time as a footballer, thus hearing the same information each time was not useful:

I reckon after the first one or two years it’s the same program that they roll out and you’ve heard it before and you know what they’re saying sort of thing; it’s the same thing each year so you’re not really learning anything new or- it’s just rehashing the same information. (participant 1)

We suggest a consideration in the design and implementation of education programs where the aim of learning is for it to persist beyond the educational encounter is the distribution or the scheduling of study (Son and Simon 2012). From a life skills retention perspective, it would seem beneficial to incorporate distributed learning across the life-cycle of an AFL career. Distributed learning encounters, or spaced learning for long term retention have long been recommended, however, uninterrupted ‘one off’ educational encounters persist (Raman et al. 2010; Son and Simon 2012; Turner 2006). Distributed or spaced learning encounters repeated over a spaced period of time are advocated as this presentation of learning encounters improves retention of learning (Son and Simon 2012).

However, rather than repeat the same learning format a variety of learning pedagogies is needed. Suggestions from players in this research for how to improve the program included making it more interactive for the players as opposed to sitting through a lecture style presentation and incorporating an online refresher course once the initial program is completed so that the footballers are not required to sit through the same sessions each year.

Outside interests

Part of the holistic development of footballers is allowing space for a balanced lifestyle. It was argued that the footballers who had outside interests and participated in the development opportunities off the field were the ones who had longer football careers. In addition, goals such as saving for a house or investing their money responsibly were thought to be ways of looking “after things off the field”. The footballers were aware of the perception that their off-field situation had an influence on their on-field performance, (Pink et al., 2015), and therefore, it was important to ensure that things were going well off the field so they could play better. Not having an outside interest could lead to football being all-consuming which could be detrimental to performance as highlighted by this participant:

I think particularly at an AFL club you need to have something that's going to take your focus away from football because it can consume you and do your head in if you haven't got other interests and other focusses and that sort of stuff it can just suck you in and it can be really overwhelming because even on your days off if you are just sitting around and at home and you're just thinking about oh I've got to train tomorrow- what do I have to do now to get me up for training and all that sort of stuff...(participant 2)

Several of the men who had been part of the elite system for many years suggested that a shift in the culture of football clubs had occurred to allow for a more balanced lifestyle and preparation for life after football, as evidenced by this statement:

Yeah I definitely think, yeah I think the shift has happened like from the start of my career to the end of it- it was so much better in terms of support for what the guys were off the field and making sure they were doing something off the field and giving them the time to do it whereas in the first half of my career it was all about football and if you had any spare time make sure you're preparing of doing something extra and all that sort of thing. (participant 1)

The need to balance both football and outside interests was important to the players involved in this study. However, the perception was that football clubs would only be supportive of completing qualifications or developing alternative skills while they did not interfere with football performance. Participants suggested that if the pursuit of outside interests became a barrier to meeting the football demands or was perceived to be detrimental to performance it would not be tolerated. While space for the development of non-football related skills has increased it was recognised that young footballers in particular may not be concerned with their future and in some cases were unsure of what they wanted to do after their football careers were over. Therefore, deciding on what to do as an outside interest was difficult. Despite it appearing that for these players, the majority of the clubs encouraged or “border line force you to have something outside of football”, the demands of football subordinated other demands (Hickey & Kelly, 2007) and often left the footballers too tired to participate in anything else. For example, one player noted:

I guess as a youth you sort of- you're not so much looking at your distant future. But from where I was they really pushed you into getting involved in something outside of football so that you were prepared. Yeah [club name] being the club I was at was probably the most prepared in that sense, and really did push that. So that was good, but it's a struggle being so tired from football and that sort of stuff to get that third thing done whether it be study, or physical activity which is

probably the last thing you want to do. So there is that sense of – from my experience that they're trying to get you to do something to prepare you. (participant 3)

Some elite AFL clubs did not appear to reinforce the need to have outside interests. This is consistent with previous findings (Saunders & Pink, 2014) who found that outside interests were only perceived as valuable if the footballers enjoyed it, so forcing them to do something was not conducive to good practice. Some participants in this research argued that the clubs they were part of did not prevent footballers from doing 'something else' on their day off but they did not actively encourage it either. In addition, many clubs have rotating days off depending on the game day schedule which can be a limiting factor should players express a desire to study (Agnew et al., 2018). Several players argued that the driving force behind having outside interests often comes from the players themselves, and if enough players are interested the club will assist in organising a course to be completed at the club. As stated by this player, the club they were at would offer courses if they were asked for:

Yeah it's probably more driven by the players. I mean a couple of boys, or one or two blokes say that they want to do something, they might sort of throw it out there to a few others and if they get a good group together then the club will sort of help get that working but in terms of them just going out I guess on a limb and saying does anyone want to do PT, not really. I guess it sort of has to be cool with the first. (participant 5)

Similar to the study by Debois et al. (2015) it was apparent in this study that the players were afforded opportunities to consider post-football career development opportunities alongside their development as footballers. Our study shows that the players had the opportunity to combine their playing career with an academic or vocational pathway. However, the transferability of the opportunity into post-football career opportunities for the players was found to be questionable because the players failed to connect the relevance of the opportunities provided by the club to what they wanted to do post-football.

Conclusion

This study explored Australian footballers' experiences of the Max 360 program (Filippou, 2014) and what the players were able to take from the program and transfer into their dual career development and specifically, life after elite sport. The data suggested that for the players involved in this study there did not appear to be a transfer of knowledge beyond the program. What was retained from education programs provided in the elite sport setting was education related to their development as players.

The footballers' playing career is a significant stage in their lifecycle and has high importance placed on it (Agnew & Drummond 2015), therefore, it is not surprising the knowledge related to football development is retained. However, we conclude the current format of life skill education (delivering content) that the players in this study were exposed to was not effective because the players failed to be able to make connections from the program to life outside of football. Therefore, the programs are unlikely to have any long-term benefit to player health and well-being during their post-elite football life.

Given this research focussed on a stage in a life-cycle approach, a longitudinal study which follows the same footballers into complete retirement from sport would be valuable to determine their adoption of the spectrum of life-skills acquired during their time at the elite AFL and subsequent SANFL. This would enable and understanding of what the value of their life skills education gained through sport is. It was determined through this study that the footballers do not recognise their football skills to be life skills as well and therefore transferable into non-sport contexts. We suggest that it is therefore important that life skill education programs delivered through sports clubs include specific information regarding the applicability of the sports skills into daily living.

Ethics approval and informed consent

This research was approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioral Research Ethics Committee, project number 7054.

Competing interests

No potential conflict of interest for any of the authors to declare.

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