EMERALD STUDIES IN SPORT AND GENDER

SPORT, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Intersections, Innovations and Future Trajectories

LYNDSAY M.C. HAYHURST, HOLLY THORPE AND MEGAN CHAWANSKY

OPEN ACCESS BOOK

Sport, Gender and Development

This is a much anticipation and welcomed text, and widely exciting because of the nuanced coalescing of three subject matters: development, gender and sport, which are deeply important to me. I know I would simply pick the book up and look to read it, based on the bringing together of Hayhurst, Thorpe and Chawansky in one space. All brilliant feminist scholars in their own right. This book will undoubtedly hold significant appeal to many of us working in the sport for development, gender, space and will become a must have resource. Those new to thinking about sport for development through a gender lens would do well to make this text their start point! I look forward to having my own well handled, marked up copy and for years to come I have no doubt I will be regularly lifting it off my book shelf and saying to research students, 'this is a seminal text, make sure you are familiar with it, and the broader work of those who have contributed'.

–Rochelle Stewart-Withers,
Senior Lecturer at Massey University, New Zealand

Sport for development must urgently move beyond its missionary phase, especially after the exacerbating inequalities of COVID. For those who deploy sports to empower girls and young women and educate boys and men, this book is essential. The authors and their collaborators offer both caution and encouragement through frank theoretical insights and instructive case studies from the Global South. I found it learned, honest and extremely informative.

–Bruce Kidd, OC, OLY, PhD, LLD, Ombudsperson and
Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto

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Sport, Gender and Development: Intersections, Innovations and Future Trajectories

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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List of Abbreviations

AGYW	Adolescent girls and young women
ASDP	Action sports for development and peace
GAD	Gender and development
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
M&E	Monitoring & evaluation
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PFPE	Postcolonial feminist political ecology
PFPAR	Postcolonial feminist participatory action research
SDP	Sport for development and peace
SDGs	Sustainable development goals
SFD	Sport for development
SGD	Sport, gender and development
WAD	Women and development
WID	Women in development

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About the Authors

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Chapter 1

Introducing Sport, Gender and Development: A Critical Intersection

> In recent years, sport has demonstrated its enormous capacity to propel women and girls' empowerment. It mobilizes the global community and speaks to youth. It unites across national barriers and cultural differences. It is a powerful tool to convey important messages in a positive and celebratory environment – often to mass audiences. In addition, it teaches women and girls the values of teamwork, self-reliance and resilience; has a multiplier effect on their health, education and leadership development; contributes to self-esteem, builds social connections, and challenges harmful gender norms.
>
> (UN Women, 2021b)

> Gender emerges at the intersection of the physical and the social, and this is precisely where sport also resides. The embodied nature of both gender and sport suggests possibilities for intertwining the two for development interventions […] Seeking to empower females through sport is somewhat paradoxical given that the world of sport can be a bastion for male privilege and power, an important arena for asserting a particular kind of male dominance over women (and some men), as well as furthering Euro-American hegemony vis-à-vis the Global South.
>
> (Saavedra, 2009, p. 124)

The abovementioned quotes – excerpts drawn from publications written almost 10 years apart – tell part of the sport, gender and development "story" since the sport for development (SFD) field was formally institutionalized in the 1990s (Darnell, Field, & Kidd, 2019). Despite recent claims by the UN Women (2021b,

Sport, Gender and Development, 1–32
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para. 4) that "sport has demonstrated its enormous capacity to propel women and girls' empowerment," the development sector has not yet provided a multifaceted understanding of the relationship between sport and gender. Our book responds to this lacuna with the goal of carving out, and unpacking, the sport/gender/development nexus. We do this by critically investigating the use of sport as a tool to achieve local, domestic and international GAD objectives – a term we refer to throughout this book as sport, gender and development (SGD).

SGD is part and parcel of the broader sport for development and peace (SDP) "movement" – a coalescence of entities, activists, practitioners, volunteers, policy-makers and scholars who identify/question/(critically) examine sport as a (potential) contributor to development on a variety of levels – including within and across local, national and global scales (Kidd, 2008; Wilson, 2012). However, over the last decade, there have been considerable debates about the scope, coherency and significance of SDP (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; Sherry, Schulenkorf, Seal, Nicholson, & Hoye, 2017). Questions abound as to whether, in fact, SDP is a "cohesive" social movement; and if so, whether this "movement" utilizes *sport* – or rather, and more loosely, takes up play, movement, leisure, recreation and/or physical culture (Hayhurst & McSweeney, 2020). Crucially – and for the purposes of our book – it seems particularly apt to contemplate the ways that "gender" and "sex" have been taken up by, exploited and/or (re)produced by the SDP movement. Indeed, we contend a more textured and nuanced understanding of SDP is necessary; and in this book, we suggest that a parsed out and increasingly institutionalized SGD movement is indeed on the rise, one that compels its very own field of scholarly inquiry. This book is our response to this need to critically explore the rise of SGD within the broader SDP and development movements, and to offer feminist theoretical, methodological and practical interventions across local, regional, national, and global scales.

This introductory chapter consists of five parts. Firstly, we offer a brief history of the relationship between gender and development. Following this, we detail the rise of SGD, and the impact of the "Girl Effect" on scholarship, policy and practice in the field. Thirdly, we introduce the book project and clarify our use of key concepts that run throughout. Fourthly, we provide an overview of the book, detailing the seven chapters that explore a range of issues across five different countries, including gender-based violence (GBV), environmental degradation, economic sustainability, the rise of informal, action sports for gender development, the politics of knowledge production in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), the embodied experiences of women working in SGD, and the ethics and risks of SGD campaigns featuring girls and young women from the Global South. Finally, we conclude by offering suggestions for future possibilities and challenges for feminist research, programming, policy and practice in SGD.

Gender and Development: A Brief History

From the early 1970s to mid-1980s, "Women in Development" (WID) was positioned as various actions taken – vis-à-vis policy, programming, and other mechanisms – through which to include women in the development sector. This era was primarily focused on promoting women's economic contributions and income-generating activities (Sweetman, 2015). Here, Ester Boserup's infamous

book, *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (1970), demonstrated how technological advances (e.g., the plow) contributed to the marginalization of women's labor, leaving them with low productivity and marginal status subsistence farming, opposing the view that modernization was beneficial for women. However, the limitations of this approach were clearly evident by the inability of WID to directly challenge patriarchy.

Hereafter, Women and Development (WAD) emerged, a slightly more radical approach which highlighted the challenges involved in integrating women into patriarchal institutions and practices, and centered more on women-only projects. However, the WAD approach failed to account for the productive and reproductive roles of WID (Marchand, 2009). Programs targeting women exclusively, particularly those that were economically driven, suddenly meant that WAD "became nearly synonymous with microcredit programs, which fit the pro-market approach and had the added advantage that, as studies showed, women spent more of the money they earned on children's nutrition, health, and education than men" (Jaquette, 2017, p. 246). Said differently, this era was marked by a consistent instrumentalist purview grounded by the "market logic" that equated economic activity with women's empowerment (Shepherd, 2016).

In the late 1980s, the field shifted again to focus more on gender and development (GAD) – whereby "women" was replaced with "gender" – in order to broaden and incorporate women of color and feminists based in the Global South, who felt that there were notable distinctions between the classifications of "woman" and "man" (Harcourt, 2018; Marchand, 2009). This move to "gender" was meant to result in an overall reframing of the field in terms of recognizing the social construction of gender and was critical in pushing the GAD field toward "intersectionality" in the late 1990s/early 2000s.

This period in development also included "gender and the environment" (GED) – supporting ecofeminist perspectives that essentially problematized presumed functionalist connections between women and nature embedded in the notion that "women were responsible for managing the environment" (Harcourt, 2018, p. 3). GAD and GED standpoints, when taken together, were both critical for diversifying the experiences of gendered identities incorporated into power relations. That is, such viewpoints embraced gender as one spoke of a larger "identity wheelhouse" to be considered along the wider helm of gender(ed) power relations. In many ways, GED helped to ensure GAD upheld more intersectional approaches that stress the importance of relations among various categories of difference – including race, class, ethnic differences and religion – and aim to locate how these categories overlap on both structural and relational levels. Still, and as Mason (2017) points out, the intersectional approach taken up by GAD approaches remained grounded in heteronormative perspectives, with transgender and queer bodies overlooked or excluded altogether.

Following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, GAD frameworks promoted "gender mainstreaming" and urged multilateral agencies to move from WID to "gender equality" (Eyben, 2018, p. 519; United Nations, 1995). Gender mainstreaming involved "both a strategy for infusing mainstream policy agendas with a gender perspective and for transforming the institutions associated with these agendas" (Eyben, 2018, p. 519). And yet, a backlash emerged

as gender mainstreaming became routinely automated, depoliticized and "bureaucratized" (Eyben, 2018, p. 519).

The failures of structural adjustment policies (SAPs) in the mid-1990s ushered in enthusiasm for more participatory, democratic and "good governance"-focused approaches to GAD. The push for international development targets (see Merry, 2016) – later taken up in the form of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – resulted in a focus on poverty reduction (2000s) leading to an agreement to provide debt relief to highly indebted poor countries. Honing in on poverty reduction resulted in gender equality objectives being overlooked. In 2005, the UN Foundation and Nike Foundation, in partnership with the NoVo Foundation, commenced the "Girl Effect" campaign – continued the focus on poverty alleviation, but began positioning girls as the "new panaceas" of development (Girl Effect, 2021). This emphasis on investing in the efficiency of girls and women as financially responsible was similarly taken up by the World Bank, framing gender equality as "smart economics" (Eyben, 2018, p. 521).

However, the Girl Effect and related campaigns have been heavily critiqued by feminist development scholars for a number of reasons. Of particular concern are the ways such campaigns often perpetuate a "feminization of responsibility and/or obligation" focused on the economization of girl-oriented initiatives (e.g., conditional cash transfer programs, microfinance activities, etc.) that end up validating naturalized and essentialist representations of girls (Chant, 2016; Roberts, 2015). The result is a "cocktail of celebratory girlafestos" (Koffman, Orgad, & Gill, 2015, p. 157) that tend to overlook the structural and historical causes of poverty and gender inequality by legitimizing, reproducing and even revering corporate-led neoliberal and global capitalist frameworks to lay claim to girls' empowerment and economic fortitude (Roberts, 2015). As Chant (2016, p. 26) remarks

> Rationales for female involvement in conditional cash transfers, microfinance, and "Girl Effect"-type initiatives appear to be deeply rooted in a range of reactive gendered essentialisms, in which there seems to be insufficient political will to transform inegalitarian gendered responsibilities for livelihoods, to challenge male power and privilege, or to destabilize socially and geographically inequitable macroeconomic structures.

Critics also contend that conflating girls' empowerment with economic vitality simply frames women and girls as more efficient and responsible, thereby underlining their compliance with normative expectations (Cornwall, Correa, & Susie, 2008; Wilson, 2011). Other scholars have voiced the perilous techniques used by girl-focused development initiatives that all-too-often use the active bodies of racialized girls – for example, a Black girl using a shovel to dig a hole for a water well or a Brown girl bicycling to school (Khoja-Moolji, 2019). In turn, the economization of girls under this "new" approach to gender (equality) and development used "the bodies of black and brown girls" and made them "hyper-visible in humanitarian and international development discourses" (Khoja-Moolji, 2019, p. 3). As Wilson (2011, p. 322) asks, "what are the implications of the kinds of 'positive' images of women [and, we would add, girls] which are produced" and "in

what ways are these images gendered and racialized?" Indeed, the Girl Effect campaign largely paralleled previous efforts by Nike to "set the tone for popular feminism's marshaling of injury and capacity as twinned discourses in an economy of visibility" (Banet-Weiser, 2018, p. 50) (also see Chapter 7).

The Girl Effect was just one strand of a broader response toward the various challenges faced by the international community – including the UN system – in promoting a "single recognized driver to direct UN activities on gender equality issues." UN Women was subsequently established in 2010 – formally known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women, 2021d). Alongside the UN, other international organizations such as Plan International also started to focus more exclusively on gender equality, specifically, through their seminal "Because I am a Girl" campaign, which ran from 2012 to 2018. In partnership with a number of organizations, Plan International, the UN and the Girl Effect launched a number of initiatives, such as "International Day of the Girl" in 2011 and turning various landmarks (e.g., the Pyramids in Egypt) pink to "raise public awareness of the importance of girls' education" in 2012 (Plan International, 2021).

Importantly, in 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emerged as part of the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," established during the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20) with gender equality and women's empowerment being essential to the achievement of each goal. The framework aims to "provid[e] a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future" with "17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership" (UN, 2021b). SDG Goal 5 "achieve gender equality and empower all girls and women" (UN, 2021a) is, of course, of particular relevance for the SGD realm. Some feminist development scholars suggest that the SDGs represented a new opportunity to reinvigorate the stagnating MDGs; with great concern that the MDGs were far too simplistic, measureable, reductionist and largely based on "the power of numbers to communicate a development agenda with a sense of scientific certitude and serious intent with potential for accountability" (Fukuda-Parr, 2016, p. 49). While the MDGs placed most of the onus on Global South countries with poverty-centric objectives; the SDGs have still been lauded for embodying "a truly We The Peoples Agenda," with a sharpened focus on the operationalization and procedures for achieving development for all countries through social, economic and environmental tenets of development (Senit, 2020, p. 693). At the same time, the SDGs have also been denounced for lacking built-in accountability mechanisms to ensure they are realized (Fukuda-Parr, 2016).

Despite the "pros" and "cons" of the SDGs, they remain a mainstay on the SDP landscape. Over the last five years, a major focus of the SDP movement has been solidifying the link to the UN SDGs, resulting in the increasing institutionalization and professionalization of the SDP sector (McSweeney et al., forthcoming). For example, The International Platform on Sport and Development, The Commonwealth, and Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: "Sport for Sustainable Development: Designing Effective Policies and Programmes" set up to explore how sport can contribute to achieving the SDGs through specific procedures and approaches. Indeed, a key contribution

of SDP to the SDGs is the focus on gender equality, an issue to which we further dissect in the next section.

The Rise of Sport, Gender, and Development

> Of all the [Mathare Youth Sports Association's] initiatives, perhaps the inclusion of girls into soccer leagues has been the most interesting and courageous […] Given that sport has traditionally been seen as reinforcing patriarchy, the question is whether it [sport] can provide a unique opportunity to break down patriarchal structures, leading towards more equality.
>
> (Willis, 2000, p. 845)

In 2000, Owen Willis wrote what was one of the first scholarly articles (to our knowledge) about one of the most established SDP NGOs – the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), in Nairobi, Kenya – and its programming for young women and girls. In the 20 years since this article was written, we estimate that thousands of SDP programs with an explicit focus on gender have emerged, many driven by large international NGOs such as "Women Win" – but some programming created by other smaller, more locally-focused entities too (e.g., Asociación Movimiento de Jóvenes de la Isla de Ometepe – AMOJO, in Nicaragua). Even still, many women and girls who participate in sport, leisure, recreation and physical activity on a day-to-day basis, outside the formalities of structured SGD programs, seem to be overlooked by accounts of SGD, at least in scholarly work.

Researchers have demonstrated that sport is a useful tool to contribute to GAD in various ways, particularly as a means to enhance girls' and women's health and well-being, facilitating their self-esteem and self-empowerment, fostering social inclusion and social integration, challenging and transforming gender norms, educating women and girls about HIV/AIDS prevention, and providing them with opportunities for leadership and achievement (Forde, 2009; Hayhurst, 2014b; Jeanes & Magee, 2013; Larkin, Razack, & Moola, 2007; Nicholls & Giles, 2007; Oxford & McLachlan, 2018; Saavedra, 2005; Thorpe & Rinehart, 2013; Willis, 2000; Zipp, 2017). Indeed, some of the early SGD research emerging in the late 1990s explored "unstructured" forms of SGD. For example, Jennifer Hargreaves examined the challenges facing the development of women's sports in South Africa, pointing to the multifaceted ways that the legacy of apartheid-shaped South African women's sporting experiences (Hargreaves, 1997). Martha Brady was perhaps one of the first scholars to draw attention to the SGD "field," particularly through her work at the Population Council that considered how sport may be utilized to address gender inequalities and improve the lives of girls and women around the world (Brady, 2005; Brady & Banu-Khan, 2002). Brady's work focused on two mixed-sex programs in Kenya and Egypt, where she highlighted the importance of safe mobility and public spaces for young

women to participate in SGD programming (Brady, 2005). Notably, the question guiding her research remains salient today: can sport "serve as a mechanism for building social networks and bringing girls into the public sphere, and by doing so begin to transform gender norms" (Brady, 2005, p. 36)? Here, Brady asserts that SGD may be located at the crux of two "types" of female activists realizing the possible potential of sport in different ways. First, she contends that development activists and feminist development theorists need to focus on sport as a tool to enhance international women's health and rights. Second, sportswomen and feminist sport theorists must "reach beyond their traditional scope to incorporate broader health and development objectives onto their agenda" (Brady, 2005, p. 35).

Brady (2005) and Willis (2000) define sport as a tool to contribute toward "development" using language from the United Nations Development Program. More specifically, Willis defines development as "enlarging people's choices" (2000, p. 840), and Brady frames development using the UN MDGs, arguing that sport is a pertinent tool to "promote education, development, health and peace" (2005, p. 37). Hargreaves discusses how development is often equated with "progress and liberation" where a "backward, usually agrarian, non-industrialized economy" is transformed into "an industrialized economy" (1997, p. 198). Today, the definition of development accesses varied understandings of "empowerment" and "progress" for girls and women.

What a number of early SGD-focused articles confer is that an effective sports structure may contribute toward social, economic, and cultural development objectives for women and girls (Brady, 2005; Pelak, 2005). Brady (2005) and Walseth and Fasting (2003) argue that the secular organization of sport may serve as a barrier to the social development of women and girls. Such studies emphasize the importance of religion, social order, different understandings of sexuality, and women's "lack of autonomy" (from a Western perspective), suggesting that women and girls may not experience the same development "benefits" through sport as those from other countries and cultures. The assumption that sport will "fix" and distract young women by discouraging them from participating in crime, gangs, or mingling with boys is put forth by both Willis (2000) and Brady (2005).

Burnett (2001) examines a program where sport is positioned as a tool to promote social inclusion for youth of low socioeconomic status. Here, she suggests sport is framed as a tool to promote participation and fun, not just "exclusivity and competition" (Burnett, 2001, p. 52). Burnett's (2001) findings also support the notion that sports development programs provide "important building blocks and the nurturing of sports talent" (p. 52). Similarly, Hargreaves notes that "a comprehensive sports structure is also an index of development" (1997, p. 198). Whereas gender-based SDP programs might target disadvantaged women and girls, high-performance sport programs tend to create training programs for promising young females who have been fortunate enough to have opportunities to get to that level (Brady, 2005; Burnett, 2001). In many ways, then, the programs for girls and women discussed in these articles often interweave program content to include *both* social and elite sport development goals. Regardless of whether earlier SGD scholars positioned sport as a tool to promote social development (e.g., Brady,

2005; Willis, 2000), high-performance sport development (e.g., Pelak, 2005), or both realms together (Burnett, 2001; Hargreaves, 1997), SGD programming to this day tends to rely heavily on the belief that the lives of women and girls in the Global South (and in marginalized communities in the Global North) will be somehow "enhanced" (i.e., improved health, self-esteem, inclusion, social mobility, integration, and empowerment) through access to sporting and physical activity opportunities.

However, and despite Hargreaves conducting research 20 years ago, it still seems that "women who c[ame] from minority groups and from countries outside the West have been marginalized, and their experiences, problems, struggles and achievements have been excluded from mainstream history and practice" (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 6). Sport feminists have increasingly moved toward exploring social inclusion and prioritizing the perspectives and needs of women from multiple ethnic and social backgrounds to build a unified front that aims to use sport to improve the opportunities for all women's participation (Hargreaves, 2000). Nevertheless, the focus on "sameness" and cohesion risks upholding essentialist claims that ignore the diverse experiences of gender and feminism across race, age, patriarchy and capitalism. Indeed, Pelak (2005) stresses the importance of actively avoiding universalizing women's sporting experiences by considering categories of difference as they influence sport and physical activity; and encourages those studying SGD to view culture as hybrid, fluid, and inherently dynamic. Put differently, she suggests we must be mindful of how "gender intersects with other systems of power, namely race and class" (Pelak, 2005, p. 55), while also being attentive to ways in which scholarship on women's sporting experiences has long focused on the White, middle-class, Western woman (Hargreaves, 2004). As Shehu (2010, p. x) attests:

> Despite the pressures created by feminists and other social movements to open up the sport arena to women and other previously excluded groups, the age-old patriarchal principles embedded in sport, reinforced at every turn by the mass media and gendered socialization, remain a major obstacle to personal fulfillment and advance in sport for many African women….[African] women, perceived as a threat to the male system of power relations in sport, become targets of toxic myths, stigmas, and harassment in sport spaces to perpetuate the domination of these spaces by heterosexual, masculine males.

Over the past decade, feminist sport scholars have drawn from different strands of critical race and feminist theory – i.e., transnational feminisms, Indigenous feminisms, postcolonial and decolonial feminisms, intersectional feminisms – to reveal the politics of race, ethnicity, culture and religion in women's experiences of sport and physical culture both in organized sport and everyday forms of physical activity, fitness and recreation (e.g., Azzarito, 2019; McGuire-Adams, 2020; Palmer, 2016; Ratna, 2018; see Ratna & Samie, 2018 for an excellent overview). Such important writings on difference as it is lived, felt,

resisted and negotiated, combined with Shehu's (2010) warnings, hold important implications for considering the contradictions of SGD: its apparent utility as a tool for empowering and challenging gender norms for women and girls; and yet, its simultaneous ability – in some contexts – to act as a catalyst for women and girls' subordination and various forms of sexual violence and gender-based discrimination.

Notably, most studies that examine the intersections among SGD allude to a lack of resources and poverty as one of the most prominent barriers experienced by women and girls in terms of sport participation (Brady, 2005; Burnett, 2001, 2018; Hargreaves, 1997; Pelak, 2005). In fact, Hargreaves (1997) argues that the "feminization of poverty" has resulted in dire situations for many African women, as the "lack of adequate housing, safe water, sanitation, and basic health care – the main causes of preventable disease – are almost exclusive to the African population and mainly to women" (p. 198). Others refer to the lack of parental involvement and financial support in young girls' activities, mostly due to the challenging structural inequalities they must navigate – as well as a lack of sports facilities, equipment, and human resources (Brady, 2005; Burnett, 2001; Shehu, 2010). Moreover, gender inequalities, "gendered spaces", lack of women sports figures as role models and patriarchal sport systems are other important factors that prevent women and girls from participating in physical activity (e.g., Brady, 2005; Meier & Saavedra, 2009; Nicholls, Giles, & Sethna, 2011; Walseth & Fasting, 2003). Finally, studies featured in the edited volume on *Gender, Sport and Development in Africa* by Jimoh Shehu (2010) explore how young women are often dissuaded from participating in sports such as soccer due to its association with cultural, religious and patriarchal norms; as well as concerns pertaining to its physicality and vigorous nature, which are thought to negatively impact young women's fertility, wellbeing, and sexuality. For example, Daimon (2010, p. 10) explains how soccer in Zimbabwe risks exposing women and girls who participate to various forms of violence through "hooliganism, sexual molestation; discrimination, lack of sponsorship, juju stigmatizations, and gender socialization problems within the home." Taken together, these studies hold important implications for considering the tensions, challenges and contradictions of SGD. That is, although some SGD interventions may contribute to reducing gender divides, at the same time, the everyday interactions and decision-making of program participants that may present resistance to gender stereotypes and norms may often be constrained due to broader structures of gender inequality (Chawansky, 2011; Collison, Darnell, Giulianotti, & Howe, 2017; Thorpe, 2016).

While these are important insights into SGD programs, Saavedra (2005, p. 1) calls for more research to "sensitize us to the gendered implications of any and all work related to sport and development, *not just to that focused on females*" (p. 1, italics added for emphasis). She also cautions those attempting to involve women and girls in SGD projects to be concerned with safety (particularly sexual violence in sport), competing obligations (e.g., sexual division of labor creates heavy demands on women and girls' time for leisure) and finally, gender and sexuality norms (Saavedra, 2005). Such arguments correspond with recent efforts by Oxford and Spaaij (2019, p. 4) to "end the static Western gender binaries that trap

non-Western women in a double bind of being represented as either empowered in the Western sense (e.g., 'modern, neoliberal, capitalist') or 'the perpetual victim' needing to be rescued." Indeed, it seems that if programmers overlook such issues, they risk perpetuating an integrative, gender-in-development approach (e.g., integrating women and girls into existing male-dominated structures), rather than a transformative GAD approach (e.g., fundamental and transformative change to existing dominant systems and structures of gender (in)equality) (Zipp & Nauright, 2018).

Scholars have also critiqued SGD programs along similar lines for the ways such initiatives, at times, simply absorb young women into existing gender structures (Burnett, 2018; Chawansky, 2011) often placing responsibility on "beneficiaries" of SDP (i.e., girls and women) to alter complex gender structures and relations (Hayhurst, 2016). Alternatively, other studies suggest that – while taking place within highly institutionalized gender inequality – women in SGD programs (in this case, Papua New Guinea) may use consciousness-raising activities about, for example, structures of oppression in their lives that may offer "potentially transformative processes that provide a foundation for change" (Seal & Sherry, 2018, p. 255). Such work argues that there are thus opportunities for young women to change through sport-focused development interventions at the microlevel (Seal & Sherry, 2018). A number of studies investigate how gender norms may be contested by young women's actions through and in sport in contexts where heteronormative ideologies remain about female sport participation, suggesting that those who participate in SGD have opportunities to resist and challenge hegemonic, often neoliberal ideologies and commonly patriarchal social norms (Hayhurst, 2014; Nicholls, Giles, & Sethna, 2011). Indeed, debates pertaining to the ways young women and girls are thought to be purveyors of social transformation and change vis-à-vis SGD connects well with the Girl Effect campaign: an initiative in the broader field of development that has played a key role in critically examining SGD research. In the section that follows, we turn to the Girl Effect in more depth to consider its role in SGD.

The Girling of Sport for Development

Over the past decade, SGD initiatives have emerged as "trendy" in international development, with this pattern largely mirroring the "girling of development" (Hayhurst, 2011; Murphy, 2017). The girling of development positions girls as the focal points and purveyors of development – sound, responsible, investable "targets" that will positively shape and achieve development outcomes. As a theme that is taken up throughout each chapter in this book, the girling of development has earned notable criticism and concern in the literature – particularly in relation to the Girl Effect movement – a campaign initiated by the Nike Foundation and NoVo Foundation that presumed adolescent girls were catalysts for change and that "by investing significantly in adolescent girls, governments and international organizations could stop poverty before it starts" (Girl Effect, 2019, p. 5). The partnership spanned a decade, releasing social media to draw

attention to the lack of engagement with girls by the international development community. From 2009 to 2019, the Girl Effect channeled "$132 million in girl programming investments in more than 80 countries via a network of 140 organizations" (Girl Effect, 2019, p. 5). Despite the arguable success in galvanizing attention on girls and "getting them on the global development agenda" – the Girl Effect report touches only briefly on the need for play, leisure and recreation, outlining that safe programs for girls involves "time for girls to socialize and engage in recreational activities" (Girl Effect, 2019, p. 15).

Indeed, underpinning the Girl Effect movement is the belief that "when given the opportunity, women and girls are more effective at lifting themselves and their families out of poverty, thereby having a multiplier effect within their villages, cities, and nations" (Shain, 2013, p. 2). Many feminist scholars have adopted poststructuralist and postcolonial critiques of the Girl Effect movement. For example, Koffman and Gill (2013) illustrate how the Girl Effect discourse "articulates notions of girlhood, empowerment, development" and reinforces the Global North/South divide (p. 84). In the subtle shift from women to girls, Sensoy and Marshall (2010) refer to the "newly emergent discursive strategies that construct first world girls as the saviors of their 'Third World' sisters' as 'missionary girl power'" (p. 296).

Literature on girlhood, gender, and development has, for the most part, ignored sport. Over recent years, however, there has been an uptake of interest in SGD by critical and feminist sport and development scholars (Chawansky & Hayhurst, 2015; Chawansky, Hayhurst, McDonald, & van Ingen, 2017; Oxford, 2019; Oxford & Spaaij, 2019; Thorpe, Hayhurst, & Chawansky, 2018; Toffoletti, Palmer, & Samie, 2018; Zipp, Smith, & Darnell, 2019). Despite this growing body of scholarship, there remains a considerable lack of research on SGD by scholars in the Global South (exceptions include Burnett, 2001, 2018; Mwaanga, 2010; Mwaanga & Banda, 2014; Shehu, 2010) – mirroring much of the work in SDP more broadly (see Darnell, Chawansky, Marchesseault, Holmes, & Hayhurst, 2018). Indeed, many "sport for girls development" programmes assume a "taken-for-granted liberatory character" focusing on "sport's allegedly progressive role in supporting gender equality" without considering the complexities of creating long-term, sustainable changes for the lives of girls and women in local contexts (McDonald, 2015, p. 1). As various SDP scholars have explained, many SDP initiatives include girl-focused programs to latch onto this current cultural moment (Chawansky & Hayhurst, 2015), and many of the sensibilities of the Girl Effect are evident in such projects (Hayhurst, 2014).

Questions of representation, ethics and resistance posed by critics of the Girl Effect have continued to emerge throughout current SGD scholarship, programming, policy and practice, returning to earlier sport feminist debates as to whether sport is "a culture of assimilation or resistance for women in postcolonial countries; and whether it is a powerful expression of these women's progress or a form of manipulation" (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 198). In turn, critical work by sport feminists have questioned the motives of, for example, "women from the west and neo-colonial elites" who were "characterized as benefactors arguing for sports resources on behalf of the dispossessed" (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 197). These

significant critiques have continued in the current SGD literature – with the majority of scholarly work by academics based in North America, the United Kingdom, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand and, to a lesser extent, Europe. Such scholars have engaged an array of approaches from cultural studies and feminist tenets of poststructuralist perspectives, including neoliberal feminisms, and feminist postcolonial, anticolonial and decolonial lenses. In this book, we take up and extend some of these approaches, critically discussing and illustrating their usefulness for investigating SGD-focused interventions. Specifically, we further explore these issues more deeply in the chapters that follow in relation to economic empowerment programming for girls (Chapter 3), action sports for gender development (Chapter 4), and GBV, sexual and reproductive health rights and climate change (Chapter 6).

Sport, Gender and Development: A Critical Feminist Intervention

As detailed above, the use of sport as a tool to purportedly improve, empower and/or enhance the lives of women and girls is not a new phenomenon. Its history is vast, complex and well-documented (see Caudwell, Mansfield, Watson, & Wheaton, 2018; Cooky & Messner, 2018; Hargreaves, 1997, 2004; Sherry & Rowe, 2020; Toffoletti et al., 2018; Vertinsky & Hargreaves, 2006). Indeed, scholarship on sport, physical culture, activity, leisure, and recreation has examined the relationship between sport and gender from a wide range of perspectives, including conservative, liberal, Marxist, radical, cultural studies, postmodern, intersectional feminism (to name but a few) (Mansfield, Caudwell, Wheaton, & Watson, 2018). Our book is not meant to serve as an exhaustive overview of the relationship between sport and gender. Rather, our aim is to focus on various theoretical and conceptual tenets used for exploring SGD – including (but not limited to) – an exploration of sport feminisms, neoliberal feminisms (as deployed vis-à-vis GAD that emphasize discourses of empowerment, self-confidence, body positivity, individualism), as well as feminist materialist, feminist physical cultural, postcolonial, anticolonial and decolonial feminist lenses.

In this book, we also critically examine the relationship between SGD and the United Nations in an effort to pinpoint how SGD has been "mainstreamed" by dominant development actors as imperative for promoting sexual and reproductive health rights – and, in the #MeToo era – as a programming model to prevent gender-based, domestic and sexual violence against women and girls. Clearly, and in the (post) COVID-19 pandemic moment, there has already been evidence of the adverse ways SGD – and the women's sport and physical activity sector more broadly – has been particularly impacted and threatened on local, national and global scales (IWG, 2020; UN, 2020).

In subsequent chapters, we build on research conducted by each of us using a range of methods (i.e., fieldwork, digital methods, media analysis) in multiple contexts/sites, to examine how popular feminism, nonprofit and commercial campaigns related to SGD are (re)produced, circulated and resisted through everyday practice, organizational policy and media representations. We inform

and ground this empirical work in a variety of countries and contexts – including with organizations and individuals in Afghanistan, Uganda, Nicaragua, South Africa and India. While the findings from these particular locations cannot be generalized more broadly, we hope the overall arguments we make throughout this book and illustrated in particular chapters and contexts can be taken up to expand feminist thinking, research and interventions in the field of SGD.

As feminist scholars, however, we would be remiss not to highlight the challenges and importance of grounding this book with our "reflexive sense[s] of humility" (Kidd, 2011, p. 609). We identify as three white women hailing from postsecondary institutions in three countries from the Global North: Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and the United States. Despite our apparent "similarities" (gender, whiteness, privilege), our gendered bodies are read, lived and experienced differently in each of these contexts, as we each navigate and respond to different histories of settler colonialism and our individual and collective responsibilities within ongoing systems of inequality and injustice. Put slightly differently, "we sit with different settler accountabilities and responsibilities in different lands" (Yazbeck, Brown, Danis, & Nelson, 2019, p. 76). Importantly, our differences (nationality, sexuality, age), as well as our similarities, shape our access within and across the varied spaces and places of SGD, SDP and development work more broadly and thus also our accountabilities and responsibilities to the communities with whom we work.

Collectively, as scholars, practitioners and/or participants, we have been involved in a number of sport and gender-focused nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), programs, projects, interventions, policy-making opportunities and other "SGD venues" throughout the last 20 years. Throughout this period, we have witnessed the ebbs and flows of sport and its relationship to gender and development. Despite our active participation in a variety of roles in the SGD phenomenon, we do not claim to be "the" experts. On the contrary, we write this book with the aim of opening a critical dialogue that values the multiplicities of knowledge and experience within and across SGD. In this book, we reflect on our own feminist research journeys in SGD while also "searching for new ways to develop better collaborative research relationships across diverse communities, all with the aim of producing knowledge that will contribute in some way to creating a more just society," (Frisby & Creese, 2011, p. 1). It seems crucial, then – given the focus of this book – to uphold Nagar's (2014, p. 100) call for a reworking of typical academic reflexivity; a brand of reflexivity that seems to invoke apolitically rehearsing an individual researcher's social identities in relation to the institutional locations in which they operate. Instead, Nagar calls for a kind of reflexivity that "could become a basis for forming situated solidarities with third-world subjects to produce potential[ly] (more) meaningful knowledges across geographical, institutional, and sociopolitical borders" (2014, p. 100). As we further explore throughout this book, especially in our coauthored chapters with grassroots SGD activists and long-term research collaborators from India and Nicaragua (see Chapters 3 and 6), it seems increasingly pressing to decenter the production of knowledge in SGD (and SDP, more broadly). Though we further expand on these key debates in Chapters 2 and 8, here, we acknowledge the clear

limitations and privileges of our positions as settler scholars in the Global North with common and distinct interests. Thus, in various places throughout the book, we have tried to clarify the instances when our contentions only refer to one of us in an effort to ensure we do claim to speak on behalf of authorship team members.

Unpacking Key Concepts: Reflections on Terminology

This book is intended to be accessible to a wide range of readers, including academic researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, and undergraduate and graduate students. We have the privilege of making this book open access, therefore increasing its availability, reach, and thus hopefully its accessibility as well. In doing so, we hope to stimulate much needed conversations among a broader range of communities and stakeholders in SGD and SDP beyond the ivory tower. However, the field of SDP is often punctuated by key terms that, we suggest, require more nuance and debate to help open the conversation. Below, we outline a few of the concepts we critically engage with throughout the book; terms that we suggest deserve greater clarity in terms of how they are deployed, understood and taken up in SGD/SDP. For example, we hope to point out the dangers in assuming some concepts are universal, static and binary and urge readers to contemplate their definitions in multiple ways. For, as Merry (2016) points out, there is great power in the vernacular, especially through local/global development interventions. Vernacular understandings of SGD, agency, empowerment, feminism, equality, and reciprocity, as Merry (2016, p. 215) writes, "need to be translated into global categories that will travel across lines of culture, class and religion." The vernacular in SGD seems all the more pressing because "these categories need to be translated into local terms in order to measure local ideas and behaviors accurately, but they need to retain their universal meanings in order to make comparisons possible across borders" (Merry, 2016, p. 215). We would be irresponsible, then, not to likewise question what these terms truly mean for the variety of people and communities involved in our research, in diverse sites and contexts. We do our best to better understand the key limitations, tensions, and (un)intended consequences of employing these terms without questioning their meaning(s) in a variety of locales. Below, we briefly note just a few examples of some of the central concepts and categories we have been wrestling with in the writing of this book.

Gender and Sex

It is important to firstly clarify our understandings of "gender" and "sex" and explain how we take up these concepts up throughout this book. As many have pointed out, the development industry has, for the most part, often failed to address the age-old binary question pertaining to "sex" and "gender" in development due to its institutionalization of heterosexual norms (Cornwall & Jolly, 2016). When gender is considered at all in development work, policy and, until recently, scholarship – it is often rigid, fixed and static and mostly focused on

men/male/masculinities or women/female/femininities. This binary line of inquiry not only fails to account for the lived realities of human beings but is theoretically unsound on a number of levels and ignores the fluidity of gender as a social construction and multiple forms of gendered identities and expressions. As Butler explains, "it is through the body that gender and sexuality become exposed to others implicated in social processes, inscribed by cultural norms, and apprehended in their social meanings. In a sense, to be a body is to be given over to others even as a body is, emphatically, 'one's' own,' that over which we must claim rights of autonomy" (2004, p. 20).

In a similar vein, feminist development and SGD scholars have discussed how gender is often superficially charted onto binary sexed bodies mostly in heteronormative and cisgendered approaches (Carney & Chawansky, 2016; Mason, 2017). Indeed, Parpart (2012, as cited by Mason, 2017) suggests that those who specialize in the gender arena in development tend to "have little understanding of the functions of gender and pay no attention to intersectionality or performativity. In practice, this means that development organizations are concerned with only some women's well-being" (Mason, 2017, p. 27).

Though gender continues to be an essential pillar of development policy, there continues to be an absence of "sexuality, gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics analyses (SOGIE/SC)2" in order to "sophisticate[s] and complicate[s] development's understanding of structural, systemic, and interpersonal inequality and the promotion of human rights globally" (Mason, 2018, p. 2). When the gender binary assumptions foray into development programs, policies, and institutions, particular understandings of gender and sexuality are subsumed; assumptions that obscure alternative realities and forms of gender identification and sexuality such as same-sex sexualities and diverse modes of heterosexual social and sexual arrangements (Cornwall & Jolly, 2009). Put differently, certain communities are prioritized over others, as "ongoing debates over gender recognition and trans rights uphold binary and heteronormative forms of gender, often fought most vociferously by feminist organisations whose raison d'etre of standing up for 'women' has straightjacketed them into binary thinking while remaining adamant against changing the harmful imposition of the status quo" (Purewal & Loh, 2021, p. 3).

Similarly, SDP is largely underpinned by a heteronormative foundation, failing to realize multiple forms of sexual expression, queer desire and embodiment – particularly in Global South contexts (Carney & Chawansky, 2016). Body politics and issues around embodiment, including sexual and reproductive health, sexual rights, queer sexualities and body security have also been overlooked in both development and SDP fields (Carney & Chawansky, 2016; Harcourt, 2018). Funding and monitoring and evaluation frameworks anchored by heteronormative assumptions, conservatism, Christian religious entities and misogynist patriarchal formulas driven by hypercapitalist entities like the World Bank, USAID and International Monetary Fund tend to drive what constitutes (sport for) development.

With the above stated, in this book, we recognize the limitations, complexities, messiness, and slipperiness of engaging with the "gender" in "sport, gender and

development." Gender has essentialist connotations and is limiting in a number of ways. We want to be clear that we regard the gender binary system, which positions people into two mutually exclusive categories -– boys/men and girls/women – as both damaging and false. We concur with Saavedra's (2009, p. 126 drawing on Young, 2002, p. 415) preference for "the lived body", recognizing how the physical body responds, engages with, interacts with and embodies the sociocultural environment. For example, in the chapters that follow, we take up the term "violence against women," but in doing so, we recognize that we may be recycling "the assumption that cisgender women experience violence by cisgender men, leaving out the question of violence against transgender women and collapsing the complexities between sex and gender" (Mason, 2017, p. 27). Thus, terms like "violence against women" ends up emphasizing a singular lens, excluding and ignoring others who might experience patriarchal violence – such as LGBTQ individuals, and even in some cases, when heterosexual men are assaulted by women (Mason, 2017). Even GBV tends to build on dominant assumptions of heterosexual cisgender men's dominance over heterosexual cisgender women (Hirsch & Khan, 2020). For purposes of consistency, and though we continue to use terms like violence against women and GBV, we continue to strive for alternative understandings, where power relations in sexual violence in development and SDP need to extend "beyond a singular focus on gender in two ways: it must be more intersectional, and it must acknowledge the social fluidity of power – that there are multiple forms of power where, situationally, the same person could be on either side of the equation" (Hirsch & Khan, 2020, p. 230).

We contend that, in some ways, SGD – as an increasingly institutionalized "sector" in and of itself – continues to play into, and perpetuate, the logic of gender binarism, with many programs focused exclusively (for example) on girls and women. In some of the chapters discussed in this book, we thus (at times) engage with this approach as if such falsehoods are true, but then proceed to dismantle such binaries and "get at" how we can ultimately rethink the logic of SGD. For part of what we do in this book is to expose and disrupt how patriarchy, misogyny and sexism operate in SDP practices, policies, programming and scholarship. In this spirit, we find it helpful to study SGD in a similar vein to Manne's (2018, p. 27) approach to studying misogyny

> Investigating the logic of misogyny often involves exploring what is entailed by such problematic or indeed flatly false assumptions, which exclude many people, and assume away legitimate and salutary ways of being embodied, living, and loving – and even some people's very humanity or existence. But it can be useful to understand the inner workings of a system that upholds the status quo in intricate and sometimes even morally gory detail, in order to see how to best combat it.

In this way, the ethos of our book is to understand how the "inner workings of a system that upholds the status quo" (which SDP arguably does, in a number of ways) may be damaging and exclusive, and must be unsettled and perhaps

expanded upon and improved. In such processes of unsettling, we are interested in how local, regional and international understandings of gender intersect with other workings of power, such as colonialism, racism and Global North–Global South relations.

Gender Equity versus Equality

We suggest that current SGD research, practice and policy has encountered challenges in engaging with the differences between equality and equity. Much of the language used by the SDGs, for example, seem to be mostly couched in terms of gender equality, especially because this is precisely what SDG#5 invokes, "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" (UN Women, 2021b). In turn, we suggest that equity – guided by a transformative, social justice approach – needs to be at the forefront of SGD policy, programming and practice.

Equality focuses on treating everyone the same, which does not necessarily lead to fair and equitable results. Indeed, if a gender equality agenda guides SGD policies and programs, we risk perpetuating "normalizing conditions, at the micro and macro level, that will benefit those who are privileged historically and currently systematically" (e-Alliance, 2021). A gender equality lens runs the risk of exacerbating and perpetuating existing outcomes, some of which end up privileging certain individuals, often at the expense of others. We recognize that "equity" is part and parcel of the feminist tools developed within the "coloniality of power" – alongside concepts such as "empowerment," "patriarchy" and "rights"; and still, we contend that a focus on equity might contribute to decentering "the apparatus of coloniality" (Purewal & Loh, 2021, p. 2) within broader SGD studies. We thus hope the chapters herein point to this crucial shift. And so, we ask, how can we recalibrate SGD to a more transformative, social justice, and equity-centered conjecture, one that exposes opportunities for more transparent dialogue and uncomfortable conversations that are guided by the "intrinsically political character and analytical foci of feminism: power and difference" (Resurrección, 2017, p. 75)? This question is one we grapple with throughout the pages of this book.

Global North and Global South

Throughout this book, we have used the term "Global North" to refer to countries categorized as upper-middle and high-income countries, including North America, Western Europe, and developed parts of East Asia. In contrast, we employ the term "Global South" to denote countries classified by the World Bank as low or middle-income that are located in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean. This division between North and South has largely been driven in terms of wealth, scientific and human development. And yet, using these terms also rather inaccurately "lumps together" and homogenizes the experiences of what are quite distinct and diverse social, economic and political contexts (Mahler, 2017). Indeed, the risk of essentializing in using the term "Global South"

is that it ends up being positioned as a term "interpellated by its pronounced alterity, reconstituting its homogeneity in the midst of its roaring calls for recognising difference […] without respect to geographical particularities and the international division of labor" (Persard, 2021, p. 128). Similarly, Global North and South have been critiqued for being ambiguous, confusing and vague. For example, Peterson and Runyan (2010, p. 34) note there are also "elites in the South who share the privileges in the global North."

Although some suggest the terms Global South and Global North are helpful for "denot[ing] social locations of subjugation and privilege," we employ these terms with caution. In previous work (e.g., Hayhurst, 2011), we have used the terms "One-Third World" (to refer to the Global North) and "Two-Thirds World" (to refer to the Global South). Following Esteva and Prakash (1998), these terms are potentially useful for representing the social minorities and majorities in both the North and South while attempting to remove ideological and geographical binaries engendered in other terms (e.g., North/South). And yet, these concepts – while attempting to embrace nuance, complexity and a more fluid understanding of the North–South divide – seem to rarely be taken up in current GAD literature, or by the organizations and audiences to whom we have geared this book. Thus, we use Global South and North for putting our work more squarely in conversation with others in the SGD space. Still, we recognize – and want to draw attention to – the ways that inequalities are not simply between countries (and they never were). They are also on multiple scales and within and between communities. We are also cognizant that "the rhetoric of decolonizing feminism has established the site of the decolonial as sometimes ambiguous, uncritically calling for Global South alliances *without recognising the geopolitical power from where such scholars and students stand*" (Persard, 2021, p. 128, italics added for emphasis). At the same time, we do not want to simply "declare our geopolitical privileges and shrug" (Persard, 2021, p. 128). Throughout the book, we try to critically, transparently and reflexively contend with our social and geopolitical positionalities – while drawing on relationality/relationships, reciprocity, ethics of care, reflexivity, positionality and embodied engagements with the methods we take up, and the places and people we work with (see Chapter 2 where we further discuss these issues).

Adolescent Girls and Young Women

In the chapters that follow, we use the terms "adolescent girls and young women" (AGYW), "girls" and "young women" somewhat interchangeably. As Pomerantz (2009, p. 148) argues, "disciplinary definitions of the 'girl' are both constructions (i.e. artificial classifications) and lived realities (i.e. real experiences) at the same time." Girlhood scholars refuse to position "the girl" as either a static subject/object, but rather understand girls as complex, nuanced and contextual beings who are able to challenge and disrupt linear/binary discourses (e.g., girl as "powerful/powerless") (Hayhurst, 2013; Pomerantz, 2009). That is, "the girl" may reflect multiple truths to multiple audiences. The concept of the "girl" or

"girlhood" (as a time period before transitioning into womanhood) is also understood, lived, reinforced and regulated differently within and across different contexts. Jones (1993, p. 159) suggests that "girls become 'girls' by participating within those available sets of social meanings and practices – discourses – which define them as girls." Thus, to elude the patronizing and tenuous language associated with "the girl," we make every effort to refer to them as "young women" or AGYW, with care to take into consideration how this period of life may be experienced very differently within families, communities, cultures, and societies.

Theoretical Underpinnings and Engagements: Feminist Postcolonial and Decolonial Theory

Feminist sociologist Dorothy E. Smith once wrote that "theory is a tool to think with" (cited in Frisby, Maguire, & Reid, 2009, p. 16). Feminist theories, in particular, have been essential for igniting new questions, resisting and countering dominant theories pertaining to social relations, "unlearning" privileges (Spivak, 1990), unveiling complex power dynamics and helping people probe, view and "critique the otherwise invisible and taken-for-granted" (Frisby et al., 2009, p. 16). But feminist approaches are of course partial, contested, and also muddied in coloniality.

Feminist theory has shifted and mutated over the last 50 years, challenged by and responding to activism and academic debate, particularly in reaction to those who were marginalized by the complicity and dominance of privileged feminists. A shift to intersectionality subsequently opened up feminist theory to decoloniality, postcoloniality, queer theory, trans theory, women of color feminism, critical disability studies and ecofeminist theory and other environmental, posthuman, and material feminisms that explore the nonhuman (Collins, 2019). And yet, some feminist theories, caution Purewal and Loh (2021, p. 1), have been "implicit and complicit with the modern episteme of coloniality by envisaging a feminism that can operate within the coloniality of power rather than viewing the dismantling of its tools and edifice as a necessary step for epistemic change." It stands to reason that feminist theories and practices are inculcated in the exclusion of, for example, Indigenous knowledges, gender and sexual minorities, people of color, and working classes (Persard, 2021, p. 14). Our book is framed by, and grounded in, a variety of feminist theories that help put our work in active conversation with other SDP scholars. In doing so, we are not suggesting these are the *only* useful orientations to explore the myriad of issues encompassed in SGD. However, across the chapters, we mostly engage with and take up feminist theoretical approaches, including: poststructuralism, postcoloniality, decolonialism, political ecology, neoliberal feminisms and new materialisms. Below, we briefly outline the key overlapping features and distinctions between postcolonial and decolonial feminist thought, two key theories that are perhaps the most prominently featured throughout the book.

Postcolonial orientations aim to draw attention to the harmful legacies of colonialism that have been replicated through the directives and destruction of global neoliberalism and nationalism. And yet, it is important to actively contest the idea that "'post'colonial' as 'past'colonial'" and instead, realize coloniality as the colonial past *and* present (Purewal & Loh, 2021, p. 1). Postcolonial theory is driven by attending to difference, striving to dismantle essentialist understandings of "cultural diversity" and subvert the dominant discourses of imperial Europe (Narayan, 2000).

Postcolonial *feminist* theory centers on the multiple ways that gender, race and nation interlock to create oppressive conditions that are so often amplified by dominant discourses of representation, development, and power relations; they may be resisted through "counter-narratives" (Geeta & Nair, 2002). In short, a postcolonial feminist lens is useful for unveiling how power is embedded in, and facilitated through, history, place, and political–economic relations (McEwan, 2009). But postcolonial feminist theory has been critiqued for being overly grounded in the abstract – in textual analysis, imagery and discourse; a theory for elites that is overly embedded in abstract postmodern analyses (Collins, 2019; McEwan, 2009). Others counter that postcolonial feminist theory was always a project of decolonization that aimed to represent marginalized people ethically (Collins, 2019). Issues of ethical representation lie at the center of Spivak's (1988) notable critique pertaining to the dangers that the postcolonial critic may encounter in continuing to thrust a "dark vision" of "Otherness," which she argues detracts from the ability of the "subaltern to speak," as they are denied full political representation. As Collins (2019) writes, "the challenge for postcolonial theory lies in seeing how its critical theorizing does and might conform to decolonial resistant projects" (p. 109).

In fact, a number of intellectuals and activists have started to move away from postcolonial feminist approaches: instead, decolonial, decoloniality and decolonizing seem to be more favorable (Rodriguez Castro, 2021; Persard, 2021; Purewal & Loh, 2021). The tension between postcolonial and decolonial feminist theory is palpable and worth drawing attention to, for we engage with both lenses throughout this book. While we do not have the space to properly dissect the underpinning difficulties, ongoing conversations and debates in using both approaches, it is important that we signpost some key issues.

In short, a central contention put forth by the decolonial feminists project is that it goes *beyond* simply studying postcoloniality. Indeed, when post(-)colonial theory is written with a hyphen – the concern is that it represents a period after colonialism: post means "past," therefore suggesting that colonialism and its effects have been "definitively terminated" (Hall, 1996, p. 243). This is one of the key critiques of decolonial feminists: that, though "decolonization" may have taken place in many Global South nations (for example), those regions are still mired in, and devastated by, the impacts of colonialism and neocolonialism. Decolonization thus more explicitly calls for political action – for not simply criticizing colonial relations but for actively dismantling them (Collins, 2019). Decolonial and postcolonial feminist approaches have also been distinguished spatially (though such static geopolitical pigeonholing may be contested): whereas

decolonial feminism has long been associated with Indigenous scholars; postcolonial feminist scholars are more often located in Africa, South Asia and the Middle East (Collins, 2019). If purposefully connected to materiality, questions of global inequality, power relations and control over resources (for example), postcolonial feminist approaches hold the potential to contribute to resistance goals of decolonization. Decolonial feminist approaches prioritize anticolonial thinking and foreground resistance. Linda Tuhwai Smith's call for decolonizing methodologies, for example, presents techniques and opportunities to disrupt, dismantle and deconstruct traditional ways of knowing; and instead, to privilege "indigenous knowledges, voices, and experiences" (Smith, 2005, p. 87).

A number of SDP scholars have taken up the postcolonial theory mantle (Saavedra, 2018), including postcolonial approaches for analyzing and untangling the relations in which SDP takes place within and through (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011), for studying specific programming (Johnson & Whitley, 2016; Mwaanga & Banda, 2014) and for interrogating the self in SDP (McSweeney, 2019). An approach informed by decolonizing frameworks and praxis, as evidenced by Oxford (2019) and Oxford and Spaaij (2019), offers research on SGD in Columbia. It shows how decolonial theory is especially helpful for explicitly questioning how neocolonialism and postcolonialism underlie SGD programs that, in many instances, tend to reinforce and even perpetuate the role of girls and women in sport and the dominant masculine structures still embedded in the broader structural context of SGD programming. Hayhurst's research on SGD has tried to use postcolonial feminist participatory action research to purposefully connect to materiality, questions of global inequality, power relations and control over resources (for example) to contribute to the resistance goals of decolonization (Hayhurst, 2016, 2017).

Despite these contributions, we suggest the time is ripe to forge new pathways of thought that depart from coloniality in the academy and the overall structures of extant knowledge on SDP/SGD, in an effort to locate "an epistemic reconstitution for feminist thought and yields new methods for consideration" (Purewal & Loh, 2021, p. 7). We thus acknowledge the possibilities, pitfalls and tensions in engaging *both* postcolonial and decolonial feminist lenses. Though postcolonial feminist theory may arguably lack the much needed sparks of resistance that knowledge projects fueled by decolonization may ignite and perhaps the term "postcolonialism" has "lost its critical edge" (Collins, 2019, p. 114), we suggest it still has traction for generating critical thinking about gender, race, nation, sexuality, class, social inequalities and social justice in and through SGD and beyond. This is especially true as we engage with both lenses (and many more offered throughout this book) as feminist scholars who embrace humility, respect, generosity and a continued commitment to learning with and from our communities of practice (Mokhtar, 2021). However, and in taking a cue from Persard (2021, p. 25), we urge SGD scholars to avoid "deploying the language of decoloniality uncritically." Instead, and as Persard submits:

> We proceed with these tensions with a commitment to pedagogy and praxis that seeks to problematise traditionally oppressive

> structures of knowledge production and endeavour to create new knowledge formations and pedagogical practices, even as coloniality and its remnants saturate and structure our feminist realities.
>
> (Persard, 2021, p. 25)

For those working in the field of SDP and SGD, such commitments can and should guide our research, teaching, supervision and mentoring, activism, allyship and advocacy.

Overview of the Book

We offer this book as an initial attempt to provide a timely update to a scholarly area that has developed and diversified significantly since the early years of the millennium and has experienced particularly rapid growth in the five years since the last significant studies that initially described the "SGD field" (e.g., Brady, 2005; Saavedra, 2009). Despite the many efforts to better account for the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts in which SGD takes place and the intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality that influence broader SDP programs and research, our hope is that this book offers further empirical, conceptual, and theoretical developments in the area of SGD (Chawansky, 2011; Hayhurst, 2011; Toffoletti et al., 2018). In the chapters that follow, we try to respond to, and advance, academic discourse in the SDP field, by addressing recent queries posed by feminist sport scholars to better understand how gender inequalities may be transformed and ruptured by an approach that does not simply place responsibility on women and girls. We also provide an explicit focus on fully contextualizing SGD in relation to current and emerging issues in international development.

In Chapter 2, we focus on methodologies in SGD, honing in on researcher and practitioner embodiment, reflexivity, ethics and research relationships. With its focus on research in five different countries, we strive to bring together a multitude of contexts and viewpoints of three scholars attempting to "do" feminist SGD research into a productive conversation. By drawing connections and comparisons across these diverging contexts and our own lived experiences, we discern critically reflexive accounts of what is transpiring in the SGD field transnationally, while remaining sensitive to the importance of community context and local iterations of SGD.

In Chapter 3, we critically examine notions of economic empowerment by considering how commercialized feminism and urbanization come to matter for AGYW in one SGD initiative based in Delhi, India. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the complexities of economic empowerment messages in SGD by exploring how AGYW in the Goal-Delhi program understood and made sense of economic progress and possibilities in their own lives. The Goal-Delhi program is unique when compared to other SGD projects in that it combines the sport of netball with life skills modules on health and hygiene, communication skills, and

financial literacy. This chapter ultimately highlights the changes related to AGYW's understanding of their futures and the challenges they experienced and anticipated as "empowered" young women in Delhi.

In Chapter 4, we discuss the rise in Action Sports for Development and Peace (ASDP) programs targeted at girls and women within the context of the "Girl Effect." We begin by describing the rise in ASDP programs, considering the potential of noncompetitive, informal sports (e.g., skateboarding, surfing, climbing) for GAD. Following this, we critically discuss some of the dominant discourses in the justifications and narratives of many such initiatives. In the main part of this chapter, we then offer the case of Sport for Youth* (pseudonym) to highlight the efforts employed by this action sport-focused organization to provide girls and young women in Afghanistan with opportunities to participate in sport and education. We then consider the struggles and strategies being employed by local and international staff of the two Afghan facilities in their everyday efforts to support young Afghan girls and women into and through their programs. In prioritizing the lived experiences of those passionate and devoted local and international staff involved in the "doing" of SGD work, this chapter offers insight into how deeply the staff value the opportunities in action sports and associated programs for improving the lives of girls and young women and the risks, reflections, compromises and contradictions they are willing to navigate in continuing this work.

In Chapter 5, we explore the value of feminist theories of space and embodiment for examining the gendered experiences of women working in the field. Drawing upon interviews with eight international women who have spent extended periods of time working for a sport and education NGO in Afghanistan, this chapter reveals the various ways these women experienced and managed their Western female bodies within and across work and nonwork related public spaces. In so doing, this chapter builds upon and extends current literature in SDP by bringing feminist theories of space, culture and embodiment into conversation with empirical material relating to Western women's experiences of working and living in high-risk development contexts. By focusing on the gendered embodied, lived experiences of international women staff within and across organizational and public spaces, valuable insights can be obtained into "the operation of gender within the everyday praxis and experience" (Partis-Jennings, 2019, p. 180) of SDP and SGD work.

In Chapter 6, we draw on postcolonial feminist political ecology theory to unpack the connections between GBV and the environment in SGD programming in Nicaragua. To do this, we discuss the utility of postcolonial and decolonial feminist political ecology approaches – combined with feminist participatory action research – to better understand, and prioritize, young Nicaraguan women's experiences of the environment and GBV as they participated in an SGD program used to promote environmentalism and improve their sexual and reproductive health rights. Throughout the chapter, we make four key arguments: first, complex racialized, gendered and economic relations intertwine to impel both human and nonhuman elements in shaping SGD programming in unintended ways. Second, gendered hierarchies, roles and relations take place and

are exacerbated through SGD, especially through the pursuit of neoliberal and colonial development under the semblance of "sustainability". Third, the prevention of violence to the physical environment is deeply entangled with the prevention of violence against women's bodies. Fourth, the young women participating in SGD interventions are all-too-often "tapped on the shoulder" to do the curative labor, while those who are mostly responsible for environmental damages and violence (such as the government, corporations, etc.) are failing to prevent such destruction from taking place to begin with. We conclude our chapter by suggesting that we must critically account for the broader physical environment, racialized power, new imaginings and formulations embedded in colonial past–presents as human and nonhuman forces continue to shape the experiences of SGD interventions.

In Chapter 7, we explore the ethics of representing girls and women from the Global South in SDP organizational communication campaigns. First, we detail recent shifts in humanitarian communication strategies, with a particular focus on representations of girls and young women from the Global South. Herein we draw upon humanitarian communication and postfeminist literature to explore the political and ethical considerations involved in representing girls and women from the developing world in SDP campaigns. In the latter part of this chapter, we focus on Sport for Youth's* social media representations of girls and young women doing action sports in Afghanistan. Drawing upon interviews with local Afghan and international staff members involved in producing online communication campaigns, the chapter reveals some of the nuanced power relations within such media portrayals. In so doing, we also draw attention to some of the unintended consequences of "positive" representations of sporting girls from the Global South, and some of the strategies employed by Sport for Youth to navigate such issues and minimize risk to staff and students.

In Chapter 8, we pivot and provide a unique look at if and how monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems within SDP can integrate feminist theories and praxis. To do this, we reflect on the planning, delivery and analysis of a MEL workshop that the authorship team codesigned with Skateistan–South Africa. In detailing this experience and exploring an alternative representational style that brings together different voices and perspectives involved in the process, this chapter comes to terms with the broad pressures faced by SDP organizations to respond to the prevailing expectations of what MEL should look like in SDP spaces. This chapter details the relationships between the international and local staff of an ASDP organization with the authors as they explore the opportunities and challenges of developing bespoke M&E skills and capacity in staff.

The book is brought to a close with a generous epilogue from leading feminist SGD scholar, Professor Martha Saavedra. As well as tracing key threads from the book, Martha reflects on the meaning of "development" and "gender and development," and how sport fits into such categories such that we can build upon the pages of this book (and the body of research that proceeds it) to have more productive discussions of "Sport, Gender and Development" into the future. Martha grounds these conversations in her own experiences with Soccer without

Borders, Moving the Goalposts and other collaborative projects before and during the upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Future Trajectories for Sport, Gender and Development Research: Opportunities and Challenges

It is only possible to cover so much in one book. But we hope the offerings in these pages provide a "toolbox" for others to use, to apply, explore and extend upon. Indeed, there is much work still to be done, particularly given the rapidly changing social, economic, political and environmental conditions facing us all, differently. Thus, in this final section, we outline some of the key challenges and opportunities we see in future SGD research, particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a review of the field of SGD, Toffoletti et al. (2018) came to the conclusion that while there has been a growing abundance of research on SGD since the early 2000s, there remains a need for further examination and an increased need for research on SGD interventions – especially to better understand gender and sexuality within SDP. Other areas in the SGD realm that require further attention include (but are not certainly not limited to): "race" and antiracism, virtual programming, social entrepreneurship, COVID-19 and the "shadow pandemic", mobility, GBV, sexual and reproductive health rights, and menstruation. Here we briefly outline these areas and urge scholars and practitioners to consider exploring these areas in future SGD studies, practice and praxis.

The Gendered Impacts of COVID-19 and (Post-)pandemic SGD

We are finishing this book in July 2021, when the COVID-19 pandemic has started to (somewhat) recoil in Global North countries such as Canada and the United States due to (mostly) successful vaccination rollouts that have helped to prevent hospitalization and severe disease (Santoro, 2021). However, countries across the Global South, where many of our research collaborators reside, have had limited access to vaccines – due to hoarding by Global North nations, "vaccine nationalism", vaccine hesitancy and other (inter)related factors (Santoro, 2021). A number of international organizations, governments and NGOs have raised grave concerns about the ways the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities for women and girls across every domain: health, social protection, economy and security (UN Women, 2021a).

With the onset of COVID-19, there are countless tragedies and losses worldwide, but there may also be some opportunities. The United Nations recognizes that COVID-19 will have "distinct and compounding long-term implications on the safety, wellbeing, and livelihoods of girls and women" (UN Women, 2021c, para. 2). Acknowledging the need to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women and girls, they state that "there are opportunities for radical, positive action to redress long-standing inequalities in multiple areas of women's lives, and build a more just and resilient world" (UN Women, 2021a, para. 16). These issues are

all-the-more pressing to understand, particularly since women and girls (particularly those in the Global South) have been adversely impacted by the coronavirus. A feminist response to the pandemic using a gender lens is urgently needed to focus on the specific risks and vulnerabilities women and girls experience due to deeply entrenched inequalities and traditional gender roles that shape how people of all gender identities experience COVID-19 (Papp & Hersh, 2020).

Indeed, COVID-19 has also led to a number of difficulties in implementing sport-related activities for sport businesses, organizations, events, and leagues – in some instances, resulting in the permanent dissolution of sport-related actors (Pedersen, Ruihley, & Li, 2020). The pandemic has not only highlighted and exacerbated social inequalities for particular populations, communities, and countries (Evans, Agergaard, Campbell, Hylton, & Lenneis, 2020): it has also negatively impacted sport, leisure, recreation and physical activity by and for women and girls (Kelly, Erickson, Pierce, & Turnnidge, 2020; Keshkar et al., 2021). The SDP sector has been similarly impacted, with a number of emerging studies that document how programming has shifted for girls and young women due to the pandemic (Nauright, Zipp, & Young Hoon, 2020). As Keshkar et al. (2021, p. 9) write, "many girls around the world lost contact with the vital support system that sports NGOs and schools had provided." Though this sudden withdrawal of support has resulted in some innovative solutions for SDP programming and policy; at the same time, it has also amplified inequalities and challenges.

Dixon, Hardie, Warner, Owiro, and Orek's (2020) case study of Highway of Hope (HOH), a SDP NGO operating in Kenya, is one of the first studies to critically consider how SDP programming needs to flexibly and creatively shift to meet participants' needs in (post-)pandemic life in a Global South context. Specifically, the authors identify three positive experiences of the pandemic: (1) increased family time; (2) opportunity for rest and recovery; and (3) improved access to hygiene. In turn, two clear challenges arose: (1) increased restriction of activity and limited access to resources such as sport equipment; and (2) challenging home circumstances related to economic instability, unemployment, boredom and loneliness (Dixon et al., 2020). Overall, the authors suggest HOH was able to support participants by: (1) providing educational advancement opportunities (through tutoring and study groups); (2) essential supplies (e.g., sanitary pads, sanitation materials); and (3) safe space (e.g., through constructing a space for small-group mentorship). And yet, we still know little about the gendered impacts and differences in terms of (post-)COVID SGD programming:

> It is possible that the life course experiences of these young women are gendered in nature…and may not apply to programs that serve boys and girls, or ones that serve primarily boys. Future research should examine the differences in experiences, interpretations, and impacts both of SFD, and of COVID-19 based on gender.
>
> (Dixon et al., 2020, p. 10)

Taken together, we see the (post)-pandemic moment as a crucial opportunity for the SDP sector to "build back better," especially by "applying a gender equality lens to all ongoing planning and investments in sport" (Donnelly, Darnell, & Kidd, 2020, p. 2). At the same time, we must foreground a postcolonial critique in contemplating discourses of (post-)pandemic "recovery," "resilience" and "building back better". In line with antiracist and postcolonial feminist political ecologists' critiques of the turn to "resilence" in the face of natural disasters using a "disaster colonialism" approach, we wonder how such recovery discourses might be "co-opted for individualized, apolitical and neoliberal recovery arguments" (Faria, Katushabe, Kyotowadde, & Whitesell, 2021, p. 89). Here, a "disaster colonialism framing offers new ways to understand the futurities of disaster that reimagine resiliency politically, as 'gestating new forms of sovereignty and new visions of postcolonial recovery" [(Rhiney, 2020, p. 1) as cited in Faria et al., 2021, p. 89]. Indeed, it is important to critically consider what a postcolonial recovery might look like and the role of SGD in such efforts. Furthermore, local, culturally specific and Indigenous-led approaches to recovery and community-rebuilding should be centralized in such discussions and any future SGD initiatives.

Gender-Based Violence, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Trauma-and Violence-Informed SGD

According to the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG, 2020), there is an increasing need for trauma- and violence-informed approaches to reengaging women and girls in sport and physical activity. From this perspective, the IWG noted a number of areas of concern for women and girls due to COVID-19, including: (1) "widely documented increases in domestic violence globally and economic impacts moving women and girls into poverty, may lead to lower participation in sport and physical activity," (2020, "Area One: Wellbeing") and (2) "the impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of women who are currently in 'lockdown'" (2020, "Area Two: Wellbeing"). Thus, another crucial avenue for future research in this area is the utilization of a trauma-and violence-informed approach to SGD. As the COVID-19 pandemic expands and the prospect of a rapid return to 'normal' fades, there is now an even more pressing need to focus on GBV and the potential for dissemination of resources and the design, development and evaluation of potential SGD interventions. The prevalence of GBV is astounding: 33% of women in the world have experienced physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives (UN Women, 2021d). COVID-19 has, in turn, created a de facto "shadow pandemic," and a devastating increase in the number of victims experiencing GBV has been observed (UN Women, 2021c). This is especially true for girls and women living in marginalized circumstances such as socioeconomic inequity, domestic and structural violence, histories of trauma, and racism (Khanlou et al., 2020). Özkazanç-Pan and Pullen (2020, p. 1) draw much needed attention to the importance of recognizing the gendered nature of COVID-19:

> Intersectional inequalities sustained by patriarchy and capitalist systems are becoming more apparent and visible. Feminism's progress risks becoming undone unless recognition of women's labour and work is addressed, including its racialized dimensions. This starts with documenting gendered lives and researching deepening inequalities that are continued and perpetuated during pandemic times. Women's roles and labour in their communities, in their workplaces and in their homes (if they have them) require recognition of the disproportionate financial, physical and emotional struggles they continue to experience. Lockdown in many parts of the world has seen gender-based violence become a "shadow pandemic" with medical, economic, and social resources and infrastructure urgently needed […] Ignoring the gendered impact of COVID-19 will impede economic recovery and prolong the crisis.

The pandemic has concurrently strained support services and overwhelmed spaces for women and girls – particularly those provided through the SDP sector – to seek support (IWG, 2020). Face-to-face or in-person activities have necessarily been restricted to limit the spread of the virus but, in turn, deny women access to GBV intervention activities and their supportive communities. In particular, we know very little about the relationship of SGD to GBV prevention programs with regard to: (1) the broader SGD field; (2) gender-specific GBV prevention initiatives; (3) mixed-sex prevention programs; and (4) the integration of GBV content into existing sport activities and programs for survivors of trauma and violence. In short, how might SGD play a key role in preventing and reducing GBV, while also providing access to sexual and reproductive health services? In terms of reproductive health, important work by Zipp and Røstvik (2020) has started to explore the role SGD plays in providing access to menstrual products. They note how "period shame" may result in "harmful myths and restrictions [that] prevent many from participating in important activities" including sport (para. 9).

Indeed, a number of SGD programs and some scholars have started to critically examine the intersections of SGD, SRHR (sexual and reproductive health rights) and GBV prevention (Hayhurst & del Soccoro Centeno Cruz, 2019) and the ways women and girls, in particular, take up these curricula. And yet, the impacts – both intended and unintended – remain understudied. This is a rich opportunity for future SGD research, particularly in the post-pandemic context. Trauma- and violence-informed practice has been identified as a powerful tool to develop appropriate programming and resources for women and girls who experience marginalization (Darroch, Roett, Varcoe, Oliffe, & Montaner, 2020). In short, a trauma- and violence-informed approach is grounded by six key principles, including: safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice and choice; and cultural, historical and gender issues (Darroch et al., 2020). We discuss these issues more extensively throughout the book, especially in Chapters 2 and 3.

Virtual SGD Programming

A number of NGOs such as Maple Leaf Sport and Entertainment's (MLSE) LaunchPad (operating in Moss Park, Toronto, Canada) have started to experiment with virtual trauma- and violence-informed SGD programming for women and girls to address inequitable access to sport within its surrounding community due to COVID-19. However, it is crucial to note that many participants still do not have access to technology that would provide virtual SDP programming as an option, especially in Global South contexts (Dixon et al., 2020). Even if virtual programming is accessible, many women and girls may not be able to participate. As Keshkar et al. (2021) warn many young women and girls are overburdened with:

> Care work and household chores, and cannot engage in online tasks, let alone those focused on physical education activities. It can be predicted that in the post-corona era, many girls will be unable to return to sports practice, as traditional roles will have set in and their contributions to the local economy and care for the family will be seen as necessary to family well-being and even survival, overshadowing the "luxury" of their sports practice.
>
> (p. 9)

Still, it may be timely and pertinent to expand on trauma- and violence-informed programming using a virtual approach for women and girls with histories of (ongoing) violence/abuse, especially for those living in marginalizing situations (Darroch et al., 2020); situations which have only been intensified by the stress, anxiety and trauma of COVID-19. The complexities of these virtual interventions have been largely overlooked by researchers, practitioners and policymakers; yet, virtual programming is a potentially promising area for the future of SGD in (post-)pandemic life. In fact, a striking number of SDP organizations adopted their programs to virtual spaces in a variety of contexts (Sportanddev.org, 2021).

A number of scholars have started to investigate virtual opportunities to engage in SDP-related activities through, for example, eSport (Hayday & Collison, 2020; Loat, 2021). Here, scholars discuss how eSport is intriguing for youth who have previously been "targeted" by the SDP community, with the suggestion that – if implemented thoughtfully – eSports may be used by the SDP sector as they evolve and innovate due to the pandemic (Loat, 2021). Similarly, Hayday and Collison (2020) examine the possibilities for SDP via-a-vis eSport. They found that – though participants enjoy the eSport community as a space that fosters social inclusion – these same participants also demonstrated masculine toxicity and discrimination that tended to perpetuate gender inequalities. Taken together, a more nuanced picture of the possibilities pertaining to eSport's ability to uphold social inclusion in/through SDP is called for, especially a more thorough investigation into the gendered dynamics of eSport (Hayday & Collison, 2020). These issues are all the more pressing to critically explore as virtual programming seems to present important opportunities for participants to continue

to be involved in SDP and SGD as the pandemic wears on. However, we suggest moving with trepidation and urge practitioners, programmers and scholars not to see virtual programming as a panacea given the well-documented digital inequities experienced by SDP participants in some contexts (Dixon et al., 2020), decreased mobility of participants and related increase in domestic violence related to stay-at-home orders and lockdowns (e.g., Ravindran & Shah, 2020).

Anti-racism and SGD

COVID-19 has drawn stark attention to, and exacerbated, pre-existing social and economic inequalities, and we have found ourselves in an important moment with the possibility to "build back better" by creating more accessible, equitable, and inclusive societies. The brutal murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, United States, by police officer Derek Chauvin, and Breonna Taylor by US police in Louisville, Kentucky, demonstrated the crucial need for antiracism social movements, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, to draw explicit attention to a number of pressing issues pertaining to systemic, institutional and structural racism (Evans, Agergaard, et al., 2020). Importantly, the Black Lives Matter movement also amplified racialized health inequalities and antiracism protests in professional sport both in the United States (e.g., NBA taking a knee during the US national anthem and WNBA players who held walkout protests and who have been protesting about racial injustice since 2016) and around the world. Anti-Asian hate crimes in North America have also been on the rise throughout the pandemic, and many important discussions about the implications of anti-Asian racism and sport in recent years have been well-documented by critical sport scholars (Nakamura, 2019; Szto, 2020). In a context of heightened geopolitical injustices, the number of racially and Islamophobic-motivated hate crimes also continue to grow, devastating local communities and the broader Muslim Ummah (community) around the world.

While there have been some studies in SDP that have critically investigated race (e.g., Darnell, 2007, 2011; Forde, 2015; Hapeta, Stewart-Withers, & Palmers, 2019), there is a need to more extensively consider critical theoretical approaches that are more attuned to the intersection of *gender* and racial inequality and "the lived experiences of specific people living in racialized communities, including the way that these experiences intersect with the present experiences of COVID-19, the migrant crisis, and the [Black Lives Matter] movement" (Evans, Agergaard, et al., 2020, p. 296). Indeed, GoodPush, an off-shoot of Skateistan – an SDP NGO that we explore in depth throughout this book – launched an antiracism initiative that has been charting important territory in this regard (see The Good Push Alliance, n.d.). While we do not have the space here to do this pertinent area of research justice – or to draw detailed attention to the vast literature on racism and sport – we would be remiss not to stress the crucial need to more fulsomely unpack and critically examine antiracism, racial inequality and social justice in future SDP/SGD work. This is especially pertinent given the current political landscape: a moment where decolonizing

sport and physical activity (and kinesiology, where SDP scholars are often working in) is more critical than ever (see Joseph & Kriger, 2021; McGuire-Adams, 2020; Nachman, Joseph, & Fusco, 2021).

Social Entrepreneurship, Livelihoods, and SGD

There are a number of SDP NGOs that support programs that use social entrepreneurial strategies to support the "economic empowerment" and livelihoods of young women and girls; a strategy we have explored, problematized and questioned in many of our chapters (see Chapter 3 in particular) and previous work (e.g., Hayhurst, 2014; McSweeney, Hayhurst, Wilson, Bandoles, & Leung, 2021). Social entrepreneurship is defined as an individual entrepreneur or organizational enterprise aiming to respond to a social problem unaddressed by the public or private sector through business-like practices with the goal of fulfilling a social mission; market growth and profitability are placed in a secondary role (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006).

For example, there are a growing number of bicycle-focused sport and gender organizations, such as World Bicycle Relief, that use social entrepreneurship to empower communities through the provision of subsidized bicycles with practical training for bicycle mechanics, especially women and girls, with the goal of providing women and girls with "greater earning potential" (WBR, 2020). Despite a focus on social entrepreneurial programming among many SDP NGOs, few investigations have focused on the (un)intended consequences of social entrepreneurship and its ability to challenge gender roles and norms through such interventions. Our previous research (Hayhurst et al., under review) has demonstrated how, for example, bicycle-focused SGD programs may: (1) enhance equitable participation in sport and physical activity for women and girls and (2) offer social entrepreneurial opportunities to realize their potential and strengthen their communities. Given the recent growth in research on SDP and social entrepreneurship (e.g., McSweeney, 2020; Svensson, 2017), it would make sense for future SDP research to better examine gender in relation to sport-based entrepreneurship (see Ratten, 2020).

Concluding Thoughts

The three of us have worked collaboratively, and individually, over the years in the "SGD field," and in other areas of scholarship and praxis. We write this book during what we suggest could quite possibly be a profound and defining moment for SGD. Our goal is to put this project in conversation with others before and after us who see the opportunities and importance of critically, yet mindfully, exploring this space. In sharing our candid stories of the challenges, tensions, strategies and (at times) "wins" that we have experienced through our work in SGD, our wish is to ignite optimism, hope, passion and possibilities for others who are currently – or aspire to be – involved in this field of research and practice. There is so much more opportunity for more ethical, thoughtful, and relevant

ways of "doing" SGD research, practice and programming. Perhaps this book is a departure point.

Throughout the pages that follow, we lay bare the gendered, spatial, embodied, discursive and political logics that both inform and are informed by feminist approaches to SDP. We do not engage as much as we could with the specificities and broad diversities and contextual differences among the multiple country contexts in which we locate our research (Afghanistan, India, Nicaragua, South Africa and Uganda). We want to acknowledge here that context remains pivotal to our discussions of SGD, and we do not claim to generalize our findings to make dangerous, homogenizing and essentialist assumptions about how it operates. That is, we recognize that the specific situation and particular geographic location of the programs, participants, communities and nations studies means that it is difficult to generalize this research to other instances of SGD. However, we position this book within Fine, Tuck, and Zeller-Berkman (2008, p. 174) framework of "intersectional generalizability," defined as:

> Work that digs deep and respectfully with community to record the particulars of historically oppressed and colonized peoples/communities and their social movements of resistance, as well as work that tracks patterns across nations, communities, homes, and bodies to theorize the arteries of oppression and colonialism.

Intersectional generalizability recognizes both "theoretical" and "provocative" generalizability. Fine (2008) defines the former as gleaning lessons about social oppression and forms of resistance moving from one context to another. The latter provokes readers and audiences around the world to rethink "the possible," and asks researchers to "move their findings toward that which is not yet imagined, not yet in practice, not yet in sight" (Fine, 2008, p. 229). We submit that this book has been framed in such a way that it may possibly take up Fine's assertions: let us reimagine a new, (post-)pandemic SGD. One that is full of possibilities, provocativity, critical thinking and (perhaps rather optimistically) hope.

Chapter 2

Doing Feminist Research in Sport, Gender and Development: Navigating Relationships, Ethics and Sweaty Concepts

In this chapter, we provide a broad overview of feminist critiques of development work in order to inform our understandings of (how to pursue) feminist research in sport for development and peace (SDP). We discuss feminist methodological and epistemological considerations for those who have conducted, or plan to carry out, SDP research. In doing so, we do not claim to provide an exhaustive review of feminist research – or even feminist research in sport, gender and development. For, as many have noted, feminist research itself is multidimensional and informed by diverse frameworks and standpoints. As Cooky (2016, p. 76) suggests:

> Feminist research is informed by larger political sensibilities of feminist movements and, as such, its goal is to explain and address the origins of women's oppression and/or offer strategies for social change. Therefore, the diversity of feminist thought, theory, and social movements produces a range of responses to the question "What is feminist research"?

Taking this cue from Cooky (2016), the goal of our chapter is not to provide a simple response to "what is feminist SFD research"? Rather, we put forward a specific argument that some (but not all) feminist critiques of development work may be helpful for solidifying key feminist values that are central to the research process(es) invoked through any study focused on SDP. The values we suggest as crucial to this process straddle theory–method–praxis and include relationality/relationships, reciprocity, ethics of care, reflexivity, positionality and embodied engagements with the methods we impart, and the places and people we work with. Using examples from our own research and studies conducted by others in SDP, we suggest that feminist approaches to SDP – that interrogate power and

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relationships, and embrace discomfort, tension and work toward "staying with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016) – provide an opportunity for recasting and reworking the SDP field.

To augment these contentions, we discuss examples from our own research, broadly categorized under the following sections: (1) mapping embodied, digital and autoethnographic encounters within a framework of feminist (care) ethics; (2) postcolonial feminist participatory action research (PFPAR); (3) representation and control; and (4) ethical impasses and feminist ethics of care. We focus on these four areas in an effort to engage with the challenges that we continue to navigate in our explorations of SDP in relation to feminist research in a diverse range of contexts. We conclude the chapter with a "call" to other scholars and practitioners who currently take, or may be interested in pursuing, feminist approaches to SDP research. To begin the chapter, we briefly outline some of the feminist critiques of development work, including a discussion of the challenges of pursuing feminist research in development.

Pursuing Feminist Research in Gender and Development

Feminist development scholars have underlined the importance of relational, embodied and reflexive approaches as crucial for bringing our attention to the multiple ways that the geopolitical, social and economic elements of various entities involved in humanitarian and development aid are produced and grounded through engagements with others (Cornwall & Brock, 2005; Mohanty, 2003). Theorists and researchers have taken up various strands of feminism to examine, resist and challenge hegemonic forms of knowledge and dominant discourses (Cannella & Manuelito, 2008). Feminist research in development has similarly played a major role in the (re)conceptualization of qualitative research methods – or the tools used to carry out such research. For many gender and development (GAD) scholars, feminist research provides an opportunity to promote mutual learning and to strengthen more place-based, authentic, ethical and trustworthy relationships with local and community-based researchers and to help build researcher capacity (Barnard, Cuervo-Cazurra, & Manning, 2017). And yet, for others, such as Mama (2009), "global feminist research" approaches to development tend to be quite detached from the realities of what transpires more locally, on the ground. As she contends, "we have a long way to go in developing intellectual solidarities that work against the global systemic political-economic inequalities that frame our work, regardless of intentions" (Mama, 2009, p. 64). Indeed, similar debates permeate SDP scholarship, which we outline later in this chapter.

While we do not delineate the vast landscape of feminist research in development here, we do briefly touch on some of the key method(ological) elements discussed in this literature and explain how some of these critiques may be addressed by five key feminist values: relationality, ethics of care, reflexivity, positionality and embodied engagements. Much of what we explore here parallels the various epochs of GAD studies over the last five decades as outlined in Chapter 1, but we hope it offers a timely "call" to SDP scholars to revisit some of

the assumptions and motivations underpinning their own work with local communities around the world.

Feminist Research and Critiques of Development

Over the past five decades, feminist research methods have evolved in relation to each of the dominant paradigms used to explore the key trends that correspond to feminist relationships to development. In turn, each framework tends to connect to particular research approaches taken to explore issues of GAD. This body of knowledge draws upon the work of key GAD scholars such as Jane Parpart, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Richa Nagar, Andrea Cornwall, Rosalind Eyben, Susie Jolly, Naila Kabeer and many others. In turn, it is helpful to examine the entanglements between shifts in development theory and feminist research in order to chronicle the methodologies used for studies on current gender issues (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007), especially those used in SDP.

There is often a combination of methods that are employed in development projects and humanitarian aid interventions that are notably distinct from those taken up in a "purely research setting" (Coles, Gray, & Momsen, 2015, p. 5). Traditionally, research in development tends to be somewhat reactive, especially in emergency situations (e.g., civil conflict, natural disasters) where more "objective," quantitative approaches tend to dominate, with rapid responses required to key questions focused on numbers that provide immediate knowledge and quick solutions (Coles et al., 2015). Indeed, quantitative approaches are often perceived to "ensur[e] coverage and representativeness" (Coles et al., 2015, p. 65). Certainly, such approaches tended to be widely used during the "Women in Development" (WID) era in the 1970s. Most notably driven by Boserup's critique that women were ignored in the development process (Momsen, 2004), (feminist) research in the WID era tended to position women and men as impacted by development processes in a monolithic way and focused on collecting sex-segregated data (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007). Studies during this time thus also turned more to functionalist, applied, and policy aspects that could, for example, "illuminate the situation of women at administrative and political levels," while also focusing mostly on the silos of women's studies and development work (Lund, 2015, p. 94). Thus, the main methodologies used for research on WID tended to derive from "critiques of particular sex, class, and race biases found in 'traditional' research methodologies as well as dominant perspectives of development" (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007, p. 199).

During the mid to late 1970s and 80s, as detailed in Chapter 1, a profound critique of the WID framework was put forth, particularly from women in the Global South (as well as women of color and minority women in the Global North), that it failed to account for the diverse, multilayered, intricate realities of women in the Global South, overlooking key concerns pertaining to voice and identity. In a partial response to these oversights, the "GAD" era emerged. As we explained in Chapter 1, one of the main goals of the GAD era was to avoid isolating gender discourses as separate and instead highlighted other

circumstances in determining women's oppression such as race, class, sexuality, and religion. Under the GAD approach, "empowerment" was supposedly "activated" by grassroots, localized approaches to women's development. Thus, the empowerment of women was understood as a prerequisite for their development. Empowerment was also suggested as something that emerged through using research approaches that were more "participatory" in orientation (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007). Simply put, feminist research in GAD tried to push for broader understandings of "gender relations" that could be produced through many levels and institutions (e.g., the household, etc.). The focus, then, was not only on women-only research and programs, but broadened beyond the collection of sex-segregated data by trying to 'get at' the nuances of gender relations (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007). During this era, GAD scholars used a variety of approaches including mixed methods, but with new appreciation for qualitative methodologies rooted in interpretivist and constructivist paradigms that shed more light on people's perspectives, norms and behaviors in relation to the intentions of a development project. During this period, methods such as open-ended interviews, life histories, participant observation and focus groups were increasingly utilized (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007; Coles et al., 2015). A concerted effort was put forth to pay more attention to knowledge, as well as different experiences, identities and institutions to unpack what it meant to be a "woman" in development.

During this time, indicators of change also became popularized in order to try to "objectively" measure, evaluate and represent "progress" and the achievement of key goals, such as gender equality (Merry, 2016). However, using GAD to produce indicators of change has been widely critiqued, as the "social aspect of indicators is typically ignored in the face of trust in numbers, cultural assumptions about the objectivity of numbers, and the value of technical rationality" (Merry, 2016, p. 5). Although GAD approaches lay claim to "the transformation of gender roles and identify gender as an integral part of development processes and social change" (Lund, 2015, p. 71), GAD failed to account for more intersectional research approaches (see Harcourt, 2018) that foregrounded "relationality, power, social inequality, social context, complexity, and social justice" (Collins, 2019, p. 45). Ultimately, GAD overlooked "women's oppression as a product of colonial and neocolonial power" (Larkin, Razack, & Moola, 2007, p. 96). This was a serious oversight to which intersectional and postcolonial feminist research approaches aim(ed) to address.

From 2000 to 2010, a "Women, Culture, and Development" (WCD) approach emerged. Bhavani explains this framework as one that "brings women's agency in the foreground (side by side with, and within, the cultural, social, political, and economic domains) as a means for understanding how inequalities are challenged and reproduced" (Bhavnani, Foran, & Kurian, 2003, p. 8). This epoch resembled the broader "cultural turn" in the social sciences that aspired to challenge more established research orientations to development. In turn, the WCD era centered on "rights, social justice, the invisibility of reproduction, and women's political agency and situatedness" (Lund, 2015, p. 72). In turn, GAD scholars continue to debate the many manifestations of women's agency, with some suggesting that the

"search for agency has reached almost epidemic proportions" (Madhok, Phillips, Wilson, & Hemmings, 2013, p. 4).

Thus, during this era (which arguably still persists today), feminist research in development has been characterized by market-based explanations for women's subordination that seems to "obscure domination, inequality, and subordination" by global patriarchal institutions (Wilson, 2013, p. 85). To further explore such issues, feminist research methods have been used to inform qualitative, locally informed systems of knowledge production (Merry, 2016), often in sharp contrast to more favored target-driven strategies. As Fukuda-Parr (2016, p. 49) implores, "quantification reduces complex and intangible visions – such as development that is inclusive – into concrete measurable objectives." However, there is still great concern – and widespread discussion – of methodological issues that remain unchanged in the practices of "doing development" (Mitchell & Moletsane, 2018). There is thus great potential as we enter the fifth era/wave/epoch of the gender/development/research nexus to open up the research process to better reflect on the politics of knowledge production, the moral imperatives that tend to drive (sport) GAD research, the ethics of research and thinking more deeply about the identities one brings to the "field," and how these are inextricably connected to "our investments in the broader geopolitical context of the neoliberal Northern academy" (McEwan, 2009, p. 265). Key works by GAD scholars have done just this, through the use of reflexive feminist research ethics (Shepherd, 2016); race and feminist care ethics (Raghuram, 2019); feminist methodolog(ies) of encounters (MacDonald, 2020; Nagar, 2014), and many other feminist approaches.

Thus, in the remainder of our chapter, we take up – and try to respond to – key questions about the importance of reflecting on the histories, *her*stories, everyday encounters and relations involved in pursuing feminist research in SDP – specifically in terms of research in which people from what is often termed the "Global North" study/conduct "fieldwork" in the "Global South." Broadly, such questions include: (1) How are we (as researchers) positioned in power relations (historical and contemporary) between the North and South? (2) Why are we pursuing research "over there" (e.g., Africa, Latin America, South East Asia, etc.) rather than "here" (Europe, North America, etc.)? (3) Who (if anyone) benefits from our fieldwork? (4) What methodologies can be adopted to challenge "unequal exchange" (working with and for local peoples)? (5) How do we come to and produce our research questions? (McEwan, 2009, p. 296). To do this, we provide four different areas through which we further explore these questions more deeply: (1) mapping embodied, digital and autoethnographic encounters within a framework of feminist (care) ethics; (2) PFPAR; (3) representation and control; and (4) ethical impasses and feminist ethics of care.

Doing (Feminist) SDP Research: Tensions, Challenges and Opportunities

Recently, SDP scholars have noted the continued influx of Global North researchers pursuing fieldwork in Global South contexts and spaces (Schulenkorf,

Sherry, & Rowe, 2016). Specifically, and as the authors note, "though the majority of SFD projects are carried out in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 90% of SFD authors are based in North America, Europe, and Australia" (Schulenkorf et al., 2016, p. 1; also see Collison, Giulianotti, Howe, & Darnell, 2016; Whitley et al., 2018 – with some exceptions, see Hapeta, Stewart-Withers, & Palmer, 2019; Lindsey, Zakariah, Owusu-Ansah, Ndee, & Jeanes, 2015). Given our position as three SDP scholars who hail from Global North countries (see Chapter 1 for a discussion of our positionalities and how we arrived at this project), we recognize that our positionalities have the potential to further perpetuate these unequal research relations.

Along these lines, it seems both timely and imperative to think about the multiple ways that feminist approaches to "doing" SDP research might potentially disrupt and (re)position the dilemmas and opportunities for continuing to understand how SDP research and practice may be more relational and embodied. This relational component is particularly crucial for helping to (re)think the various (dis) connections among NGOs, corporate staff, government agencies, aid institutions, SDP participants, local community members, and the like. In turn, we outline the ways that feminist research in development – particularly embodied, (auto)ethnographic and reflexive approaches – has been somewhat overlooked in SDP research. We then explain why they remain crucial for grounding the gendered, lived experiences of development "beneficiaries," practitioners and researchers alike (Thorpe & Chawansky, 2021). Throughout the chapter, we also contend that foregrounding "the body" and the "fleshy" and material (e.g., nonhuman) elements of sport and physical culture are valuable ways to "know with" – and through – feminist SDP research. Such approaches are essential to help highlight multiple SDP subjectivities and to better understand how gendered power relations come to the fore – and actually materialize – through our everyday research practices (Chawansky, 2015; Pavlidis & Olive, 2014).

Research Relations, Ethics and Discomfort as "Sweaty" Concepts in Feminist SDP Research

One ethical consideration that feminist SDP scholars would do well to consider is how their presence in Global South contexts impacts upon the program staff and participants they may be studying. There is a strong discourse in development and SDP research that a "real" researcher has spent extensive time "on the ground" living, feeling, smelling and tasting the "exotic" location, connecting with the "locals" in authentic ways, and critically and systematically observing the programs in action, all with the aim that the research somehow contributes to improvement in the lives of those involved in the local programs. Yet, such discourses of "authenticity" in SDP research are haunted by the highly problematic approaches of the early anthropologists (Handelman, 1994). Some SDP scholars have weighed up the potential risks and damages they may do through their work,

yet most continue to justify the "going" into the field by the promise of doing *some* good through their careful roles as highly reflexive, critical and culturally sensitive "middle walkers" (see Wilson, 2014).

While some feminist research highlights the benefits of immersing oneself in local fields of development (Cook, 2007) or combining interviews with short ethnographic visits (Partis-Jennings, 2019), feminist critiques of development should encourage us to ask ourselves the advantages and disadvantages not only for our own research in "going" to the field(s), but also the additional labor that it may require of those staff running the programs and/or the risks our presence may pose to others. Thus, below, we offer some reflections from Holly's research on Sport for Youth (pseudonym), an action sports and education-focused SDP in Afghanistan, to highlight a feminist ethical impasse that she faced during the early stages of this particular project.

After winning a grant that would provide her with the opportunity to finally visit the Sport for Youth facilities in Afghanistan, Holly quickly set about working with the organizational leadership to discuss and organize her first fieldwork visit. During the time of these conversations, however, the Taliban was exerting growing force in Kabul and the NGO was in the process of withdrawing all international staff in an effort to limit any risks to the local staff and participants. As a further risk management strategy, they had also stopped all international press or visitors to the Kabul facilities. While the organizational leadership noted that they remained committed to her research and would continue to support the planned visit, these initial conversations and the rapidly changing situation gave her much to reflect upon. Furthermore, Holly's university required an extensive process of applying to travel and do research in a high-risk country, with many legalities to consider, including high insurance costs.

Working closely with Sport for Youth and her University, Holly was eventually granted approval from her university's leadership team to travel to Kabul for the research. However, by this time something was not sitting well with her. No longer filled with excitement to finally meet the local staff in person and to observe the programs in action (programs she had been studying from afar for a number of years already), she continued to ponder the discomfort that she was feeling and the multiplicities of risk involved. No longer young, carefree and embodying the "adventurous spirit" of "real" SDP researchers, she was starting to think differently about the impending fieldwork. With a baby at home, and thus new responsibilities as a mother and partner, she wondered if this was the feeling of dread that was building in the pit of her stomach. But, sitting with discomfort is an important feminist strategy (Shope, 2006), and it was through the act of turning her doubts over and over again, returning to them from different perspectives, that she came to the realization that it was the idea of putting the local staff and students at risk through her mere presence that was the most worrying. As a feminist scholar, putting program participants (Afghan children) and research participants (local staff) at risk because of her presence (as a very visibly

international white woman) was unconscionable (Wibben, 2016). This meant giving up seeing the programs "in action" and hearing the stories of the Afghan participants and possibly even the "credibility" of her research in a field that continues to prioritize physical presence. However, taking inspiration from Read (2018) and others who have critiqued similar assumptions underpinning development research more broadly, Holly pursued alternatives to access and understand the embodied experiences of local and international development workers rather than the program participants. With permission from the granting agency to revise the methodology, Holly then designed a digital methodology (Skype interviews and social media analysis) that – while perhaps not as academically adventurous – better aligned with her feminist consciousness.

Over a period of three years, she conducted Skype interviews with local and international staff who currently or had previously worked for the action sport-focused NGO in Afghanistan. In this way, new voices and perspectives not limited by time or geography were opened up, and a more longitudinal understanding of the organization and the lived and embodied experiences of local and international staff emerged (see Chapters 4, 5, 7, and 8). Using digital methods such as Skype interviews required additional organization to set up meeting times that suited participants across time zones and patience in managing bad connections and dropped lines.

As with any project, there were strengths and limitations with the methodological choices and researcher positioning that Holly took, and this was particularly the case as she was trying to access experiences of embodiment (Dyvik, 2016; Read, 2018). While conducting interviews via Skype may seem to be a rather disembodied approach, Holly found herself becoming particularly attuned to the body language of the participants (Longhurst, 2018), the tone of their voices, their gaze, and the sights and sounds in the background. She also took great care to respect the culture of the local staff by wearing modest clothing and a head scarf during interviews. Her participants were incredibly generous with the time and detail in which they shared their experiences of working for Sport for Youth (their joys, fears and frustrations), and she often wondered as to their willingness to participate in the project and their consideration in what to share and what to hold back from the white woman on their screen. Some interviews with local staff included another staff member as a translator, which not only made for some challenges (see below) but also enabled new researcher relations and intimacies to emerge. For example, an interview with an older Afghan woman concluded with her asking (via a slightly nervous younger male Afghan translator) a series of questions about Holly's age, marital status and number of children. She joked (via the translator) that Holly didn't look her age, and the short conversation about their children evoked a surreal warmth through the screen:

Interviewer As we come to the end, I wonder… Do you have anything else you want to tell me about your work at [Sport for Youth], what you do – is there anything I have not asked that you want to tell me?

Interviewee (via translator) We have a really hard question. Where are you from, how many family members do you have, are you married or not?

Interviewer Me? Yes, I am married. I have one son, a little boy. He is two and a half and he is very busy – always running around, climbing, climbing and falling over, very chatty, chatty, chatty. I work at the university and I am a teacher, so it is a busy life but I'm very honored to be working with [Sport for Youth]. It is a wonderful experience for me, and it's a big part of my work over the next three years.

Interviewee (via translator) She also asked a hard question for females, how old are you?

Interviewer How old am I? I am 35.

Interviewee (via translator) She said it is very nice to meet you, and to be honest you're not looking 35.

Interviewer It is very dark here, so you cannot see all the wrinkles.

All Laughter

Through this dialogue, Holly recalls it was almost as if the translator disappeared (temporarily out of sight and not a focus for either of the women) as two mothers – researcher and participant – smiled and laughed at the joys and challenges of raising young children. Interestingly, it was the Afghan woman who reached out, across the screen, to connect in this highly personalized way. Conducted more than five years ago now, this surprisingly intimate digital exchange and the open conversation that followed remains vivid in Holly's embodied memories of this research. This is just one example of many that surprised Holly in the potential for personal connection and rich empirical insights shared through digital methods when travel is no longer the most ethical (i.e., environmentally, socially) or feasible (i.e., COVID, health, cost) option for SDP research.

In the broader project, the researcher-participant relations with the international staff, the majority of whom were women from the Global North, offered a different set of considerations. Holly suspects that the superficial similarities (highly educated, Western, white, women) between herself and some of the international women staff may have contributed to their initial willingness to participate and openness in sharing some of the embodied tensions, pleasures and discomforts of living and working in Afghanistan (de Jong, 2017; Enloe, 2016). However, it was their seeming similarities in combination with their differences and Holly's outsider positioning in the field (she is not a development worker and had not spent time in Afghanistan) that prompted their detailed descriptions of what it was like to be a Western woman working in this context.

With a feminist focus on strong reflexivity (Harding, 1996) and situated and situating knowledges (Haraway, 1988; Rose, 1997) at the fore, Holly acknowledges that her decision not to travel to Afghanistan may have prompted her curiosity in how the local and international staff made meaning of risk, and particularly the local and Western women's embodied experiences in this specific geography. It is very likely that the researcher's similarities and differences with the participants caused some comments from the early interviews to "glow" (MacLure, 2013), thus prompting further investigation on particular topics over others. As a white Western female feminist scholar, Holly continued to reflect on her (virtual) "presence" and positionality in the research, and her relations with participants, even when she was not "in the field" per se. Even when we do research from a distance, we remain firmly situated in the knowledge produced – the questions asked, the interpretive modes adopted, and the theoretical and representational styles chosen to present the voices of participants and communities (Olive & Thorpe, 2011; Thorpe & Chawansky, 2021).

Furthermore, as this example illustrates, it is also important to sit with feminist tensions as and when they arise, and we should be willing to divert (or even end) a project if it becomes apparent that the gains for the researcher far outweigh the risks and rewards for the local programs and participants. In theory, we should do our best to anticipate and avoid such problems before a project begins. But it is also important to acknowledge that ethical research practices should be responsive to the changing environment (i.e., increasing risk levels, changes within the organization) and throughout different stages of the research. There may be instances where such feminist tensions emerge in the middle or even late in a project, and these should not be ignored just because we are "too far in." Sometimes power imbalances and potential research injustices (and injuries) are felt in our bodies first, and feminist researchers working in SDP would do well to find practices that help us hone into (repeatedly return to) our lived, felt, embodied understandings of risk, relationships and ethics, alongside our more academic reading on the workings of power and research methods in critical and feminist development studies.

What's clear, then, is that feminist reflexivity in SDP is not simply a "tick-box exercise" we complete at the beginning of a project (Pillow, 2003). Rather, practicing feminist reflexivity in SDP requires the everyday work of acknowledging our own positionality, always in relation to our participants and broader global power inequalities. Feminist reflexivity is also a dynamic and fluid practice that we come back to again and again, before, during and after our research "in the field." As Adu-Ampong and Adams (2020) highlight in their fieldwork encounters in Ghana and Malawi, reflexivity in the fieldwork encounter is a "site of shifting, negotiated, and fluid positionalities for both full insiders and fully outsiders" (p. 583).

Making spaces within a project to sit with the tensions and discomfort, and being willing to respond to them (even if it challenges the expectations from our institutions, granting agencies, supervisors, etc.), is a feminist responsibility (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000). As Chadwick (2021) writes, discomfort is a highly affective, embodied and "sweaty concept" that "opens space for transformatic praxis and the emergence of feminist forms of knowing, being and resisting" (p. 1). Weaving together the work of Clare Hemmings and Sara Ahmed, Chadwick (2021)

encourages postcolonial feminist scholars to (1) engage with "gut feelings" and (2) embrace interpretive hesitancy (p. 1). Continuing, she writes:

> The politics of discomfort is, of course, racialized, classed and shaped by various modes of privilege. As a result, the politics of discomfort will materialise and resonate very differently for researchers and feminists across raced, classed, sexualized, gendered, ethnic and dis/able-bodied differences. For white feminists and others in privileged identity zones, feelings of discomfort can threaten wilful, lazy and easy forms of ignorance (Pohlhaus, 2012). As a result, starting, and staying, with discomfort potentially comes a form of radical praxis integral to recognising and countering the reproduction of harmful and systematic ignorances. … As a form of feminist affective praxis, engaging the politics of discomfort is integral to the development of inclusive, emancipatory and alternative feminist knowledges.
>
> (Chadwick, 2021, p. 9)

From our own lived experiences of trying to "stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016) in SDP research, we see the "epistemic and political salience of discomfort as affective intensity, 'sweaty concept' and potentially transformative interpretive resource" (Chadwick, 2021, p. 1) for feminist SDP researchers seeking to move toward more responsible, ethical, embodied and "affective methodologies" (Knudsen & Stage, 2015). In the next section, we examine autoethnography as a specific avenue for pursuing such approaches.

Using Autoethnography to Process Sweaty Encounters

After experiencing a number of troubling situations as both a practitioner and researcher in the SDP field, Megan made the case for engaging the method of autoethnography as a way to process and examine the complex ethical issues she encountered (Chawansky, 2015; Chawansky & Mitra, 2018). In her previous work, Megan offered autoethnographic vignettes on issues such as white privilege, sexual harassment, and everyday sexism (Chawansky, 2015). She also examined the complexities of "situated solidarities" with colleagues and peers in the SDP field, highlighting how "the possibilities of alliances are inseparable from a deep commitment to critique," even – and perhaps especially when – the self is central to that critique (Nagar, 2014, p. 5). These concepts and experiences (of white privilege, sexual harassment and everyday sexism) are no doubt familiar to readers intellectually, but Megan's use of autoethnography was an attempt to share an embodied and emotive experience of these concepts as she confronted them in particular SDP locations and moments. Writing about the embodied experiences of fear, embarrassment, and shame offered new ways of understanding and knowing about SDP work and further shows how the "personal is political" for women's lives, especially when operating in spaces and places that may be less amenable to women.

Another unique dimension of autoethnography is that it offers opportunities for uncertainty, discomfort and ambivalence to be explored. That is, in her

previous research, Megan did not seek to utilize autoethnography to resolve any particular tensions or absolve herself (or others) from a particular transgression (Chawansky, 2015). Her feelings about some of the situations she describes in her writing still make her pause and wonder what is missing from her understanding or her "take" on the situation. In this way, she understands the writing itself to be a "method of inquiry" (Richardson, 1994). Writing about the difficult, sweaty moments of SDP work, fieldwork, and collaborations allowed her to practice "radical vulnerability," something she continues to (try to) utilize in her work (Nagar, 2014, p. 5). Broadly speaking, this approach has been accessed by a number of SDP scholars (e.g., Forde, 2015; Hillyer, 2010; Van Luijk, Forde & Yoon, 2019; McSweeney, 2019) to explore a multitude of issues and themes.

Practicing the notion of radical vulnerability allowed her to work through the inevitable contradictions and tensions she experienced, and it also allowed her to reciprocate the openness and vulnerability displayed by her research participants and her SDP colleagues (Sherry, 2013). While she has frequently "conducted" interviews during which she asked people to share important and intimate details and moments of their lives, she only finds it fair to share her own, albeit to a different audience. Some critics see autoethnography as self-aggrandizing, but a focus on the lives of aid and development workers "is central to generating a literature on development that goes beyond accusation and blame … [it] produces new avenues for reexamining the processes of development" and it can allow for new questions to emerge for leaders, practitioners and researchers in SDP (Fechter & Hindman, 2011, p. 3; also see Chapter 7).

Moreover, autoethnographies of aid/SDP workers can generate a body of literature that is often accessible to a variety of readers. These "stories bring worlds into being" and allow us to collectively engage in "the work of co-creating futures" within and outside of SDP (Dutta, 2018, p. 94). Since completing her 2015 publication on autoethnography, Megan has continued to utilize autoethnographic approaches to work through tensions that deal with issues of sexuality and heteronormativity in SDP, namely the limited attention given to queer bodies – including her own – in SDP spaces (Chawansky, 2021; Válková, 2021). This work is done, in part, to help co-create a future SDP wherein queer bodies are included, supported, and fully able to access sporting initiatives. While many readers will recognize that "intersectionality is intrinsically connected to activism against inequalities and for enacting change" and will agree that we are well served to include and consider all forms of diversity in SDP and sport, gender and development (SGD) work, a challenge persists for Megan when this call becomes personal (Bonifacio, 2019, p. 61). When this call moves to her and through her body, it implores her to "come out" as a queer SDP practitioner in spaces and moments that did not – and do not – feel safe. When this call comes to her, it makes her worry that talking about her partner will compromise research relationships or access. When this call finds her, it makes her self-conscious as she recounts how her fear made her avoid social events even if it meant bypassing opportunities for informal engagement with work colleagues. And when this call makes her break out into a sweat, she recalls her strategies for redirecting conversations about boyfriends and dating and husbands (Chawansky, 2021).

Writing her (queer) self through these calculations, difficult moments, and ethical impasses is a way for Megan to both document the tangible effects of heteronormativity and to imagine hopeful new futures for SDP spaces.

In the next section, and building on the work of Megan and Holly, Lyndsay explores how her use of PFPAR helped her to critically consider issues of mutuality, ethics, and representation in pursuing feminist SDP research with an NGO and young women program participants in Nicaragua.

Postcolonial Feminist Participatory Action Research and SDP

> Those who have been most adversely affected by injustice must lead research collectives or be key decision makers.
>
> (Fine & Torre, 2019, p. 435)

The words of Fine and Torre (2019) usefully anchor one of the key ingredients of PFPAR, particularly in its action research focus – one which is infused by "participatory process[es] concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes" (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 4). Action research is historically rooted in the emancipatory goals of Latin American scholars (e.g., Freire, 2000) and is focused on promoting socially just approaches to scholarship that are driven to provide practical solutions to "liberate the human body, mind and spirit in search for a better, freer world" (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 4).

In the remainder of this section, we draw upon Lyndsay's research experiences to highlight the benefits and challenges of taking up a postcolonial feminist orientation to participatory action research (PAR) approach. We also examine how PFPAR can be extended through grounding postcoloniality as an abstract concept by honing in on the materiality of inequalities (e.g., incomplete, insufficient and crumbling infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, racist policies, sexism) that many young women participating in SDP programming face on a daily basis. We further contend that visual and digital methods and embodied approaches point us toward crucial questions related to how personal accounts from "Northern" practitioners contribute to debates around evidence, impact, and the utility of SDP "work" (Chawansky, 2015; Hayhurst, 2017).

Such questions of power, embodied experience and local voice connect to PAR approaches. And yet, as Fine and Torre (2019, p. 435) warn, PAR research must be guided by "those who have been most adversely affected by injustice […] and foreground those perspectives that are usually ignored and silenced from communities under siege." Here, we build on Harding's (1995) notion of "strong objectivity," "for research teams of *differently positioned people* who work through and across their distinct standpoints and are therefore most likely to generate robust, counter-hegemonic evidence" (Fine & Torre, 2019, p. 435, italics added for emphasis). This, then, is where the utility of postcolonial feminist approaches to PAR become most apparent: for challenging, critiquing, and

dismantling the dominant discourses and taken-for-granted structures imbued in the SDP "movement."

PAR centers on the idea that social inquiry projects should involve the active participation of traditionally marginalized groups, striving to root the research process in ethics and responsibility, with a goal of exposing and working alongside those groups who have suffered social injustice (Fine & Torre, 2019). PAR practices aim to upend "who constructs research questions, designs, methods, interpretations, and products, as well as who engages in surveillance" (Fine, Tuck, & Zeller-Berkman, 2008, p. 161). PAR approaches also ask research team members to probe more deeply into how they participate in a given research project by critically considering who is participating and who is not, what level of participation is involved (e.g., minimally or maximumly involved throughout the project), who represents the community in community-based PAR research – all of these questions – and more – are crucial to consider before, during and after PAR studies (see Wallerstein & Duran, 2006; McSweeney et al., under review).

In the realm of sport and international development studies, there are a number of examples of participatory and collaborative approaches that have been used, in particular, studies with research team members from a variety of positionalities, social locations and geographies. PAR approaches to these vast global, multisited projects are thought to redress unequal power relations between researchers and participants, striving to make research more locally driven, social justice–oriented and potentially transformative (e.g., Collison et al., 2016; Hayhurst, 2016; Sherry, Schulenkorf, Seal, Nicholson, & Hoye, 2017). In turn, many of the projects we as authors, project managers, and collaborators have pursued in SDP carry responsibility with and for the communities, particularly communities of color, LGBTQ2S+ and others experiencing systematic disenfranchisement – relating to broader issues of power and privilege and to "unequal geographies of knowledge and power" (Epstein, Fahey, & Kenway, 2013, p. 479). With few exceptions, the ethical dilemmas that have been brought to bear by feminists have been relatively underplayed in SDP scholarship and research (with some exceptions – see Chawansky, 2015), which is why we contend that *postcolonial feminist* and orientations to PAR – and to embodied research approaches – are of particular importance in SGD-related projects. In turn, visual and digital methods may in fact provide possibilities of (re)imagining the methods used in feminist approaches – a point we turn to in our conclusion of this chapter.

The links among various dimensions of feminist theory and PAR have been well-articulated and debated by Reid, Frisby and colleagues (see Frisby, Maguire, & Reid, 2009; Reid & Frisby, 2008). Here, intersections of race, gender, class, and an acknowledgment of how multiple axes of power produce marginalization are at the center of PAR-focused inquiries (Anderson, Khan, & Reimer-Kirkham, 2011; Cammarota & Fine; Genat, 2009; Reid & Frisby, 2008). Along these lines, Indigenous scholars such as Jeremy Hapeta and colleagues have furthered such critiques, arguing specifically for Indigenous approaches to SDP that prioritize research from, with and for the community, with Indigenous principles guiding the entire research process (Hapeta, Stewart-Withers, & Palmer, 2019). A PFPAR approach holds the potential to endorse different SDP knowledges and practices

by striving to connect – and highlight – academic research on SDP with transformative actions (that may already be taking place) "on the ground" or with a clear focus on the everyday embodiment of SDP participants and the materiality of their experiences. For example, this might involve centralizing Indigenous knowledge and the dispossession of land, prioritizing land-based pedagogies and experiences and dismantling the concept of SDP altogether in favor of reinvigorating Indigenous alternatives. PFPAR research approaches hold the potential to draw more explicit attention to, for example, land-based models and to show how more culturally appropriate approaches and knowledge transmission is significantly undervalued in comparison to Western, white settler approaches and SDP models (see Henhawk & Norman, 2019). Ultimately, truly decolonizing SDP will require a significant shift in researcher-community relations, though we argue that postcolonial feminism may offer a valuable stepping stone in this direction.

Postcolonial feminism actively extends feminist PAR approaches by striving to challenge existing hierarchies and opposes institutionalized forms of oppressive power that are immersed within Eurocentric discourses (Raghuram & Madge, 2006). Postcolonial feminist theory recognizes that "participation" is intensely rooted in colonial and imperial projects of development in the Global South (Hayhurst, 2017; McEwan, 2009). A postcolonial feminist approach thus also builds on PAR studies by directly confronting the seduction of neocolonial "compassion" that tends to buttress "helping" and "making a difference" imperatives (see Unger, 2004). To this end, postcolonial feminist approaches to PAR amplify polyvocality, "speaking up and speaking back" (Mitchell & Moletsane, 2018, p. 14) to intentionally disrupt the colonial, heteropatriarchal legacies of SDP (research) that tend to position it as a unified, homogenous sector led by Global North practitioners and scholars (see Schulenkorf et al., 2016) (also see Chapter 5 for a critical discussion of the embodied experiences of Global North women working in the sector). Thus, a priority in using PFPAR is to decenter particular ways of knowing and doing SDP and acknowledge the nuances, messiness, and complexities of Global North–South research collaborations and funding relations with the goal of producing new SDP scholars, practitioners and policymakers. In fact, a postcolonial feminist method is attentive to the intricate relations entangled in particular spaces, places, knowledges and histories.

To address these issues, PFPAR offers a way to reconceptualize postcolonial feminist approaches so that research extends beyond a postcolonial analysis (i.e., studies of coloniality or postcoloniality) to a more socially engaged, thoughtful, collaborative model that reworks the purposes of research and the epistemologies that inform it (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2007; Swadener & Kagendo, 2008). There is great potential here for a more materialist connection with postcoloniality that highlights the technologies of colonization (e.g., linguicide, the deployment of Western epistemologies, and the determination of "valid" research questions) so that alternative perspectives and voices are prioritized (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). In doing so, there is an opportunity to respond to critics who argue that postcolonial feminist theory fails to actively go beyond "studying coloniality" (Reid & Frisby, 2008, p. 94). That is, and as McEwan (2009) asserts, postcolonial feminisms are potentially disconnected from material

concerns and realities of "subalterns." And yet, research that is inspired by PFPAR approaches recognizes and works within the understanding that non-Western knowledge forms have for too long been excluded, silenced from, and/or marginalized within most research paradigms and development work. This relates to Spivak's (1988) renowned question, "Can the subaltern speak?" and prioritizes issues of representation, as well as other concerns relating to research project initiation, benefits, legitimacy and accountability that guide PFPAR orientations.

The aforementioned theoretical tenets and key concepts may be further heightened by pairing PFPAR with visual research methods in SDP. We thus suggest bridging PFPAR with visual methods – such as photovoice (which involves giving cameras to research participants to take photos that shed light on their experiences – see Wang, 2006) and digital storytelling (a video and/or picture presentation that tells the "story" of an individual, community and/or group – see Mitchell, De Lang, & Moletsane, 2017) to facilitate new ways of uncovering how gender inequalities intersect with other categories of difference, particularly within the context of SDP practices and programs. Other scholars who have used PAR strategies with Indigenous communities have explained that cameras can function as "recorders and potential catalysts for social action and change in their communities" (Lavallée, 2009, p. 30). Furthermore, such methods are also particularly helpful for "getting at" the embodied experiences of those participating in SDP initiatives. As Coffey (2019) explains in her use of participatory visual methods with youth to understand their embodied and bodily experiences of health and self-image:

> These methods explored affective dimensions of everyday embodiment through speech and verbal interactions and narratives as well as visual methods, including photographs to illustrate the importance of sensations in how body image is produced in the everyday and modulates over time. These methods provided the basis for a theoretically rich analysis of the ways gendered embodiment is produced through the sensory, affective, discursive, and material aspects of bodily practice.
>
> (Coffey, 2019, p. 78)

Here, using visual research methods is one approach to *get at* a broader PFPAR methodology, one that may actually gain meaningful traction in amplifying the visual and affective perspectives of bodies, embodiment and the agency of both humans and nonhumans in SDP. Along these lines, feminist sport and physical cultural scholars are developing an array of methods to explore the various ways digital technologies cultures and spaces such as Twitter, Instagram and TikTok are also being taken up by women to resist dominant representations and to build communities of support more frequently in sporting and physical cultural communities (Ahmad & Thorpe, 2020; Toffoletti, Thorpe, Pavlidis, Olive, & Moran, 2021). Although few are working at this intersection (e.g., Smith, Danford, Darnell, Larrazabal, & Abdellatif, 2021), we see the potential in using PAR in tandem with innovative feminist research methods (including visual,

digital and object-oriented material methods) and postcolonial approaches to centralize the *embodied* and *material* dimensions of SDP, thus offering a useful tool for translating postcolonial imperatives into practice. Below, Lyndsay provides an example where she applied a PFPAR orientation to explore a SGD program in Nicaragua.

PFPAR and Visual Methods in Nicaragua

The research discussed below took place in January 2015 in a rural community located in Southern Nicaragua. Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Western hemisphere with a population of 5.5 million inhabitants (Hunt, 2011). The country has been in a relatively constant state of emergency for nearly four decades (Hunt, 2011). Indeed, it was largely "ravaged" in the 1990s as it tried to recover from civil war, subjected to the implementation of structural adjustments – exacerbated by neocolonial global capitalism – which only exacerbated inequalities between the "elites" and the poor (Hunt, 2011).

The economy is primarily agriculturally driven, though in recent years it is largely based on tourism. The community is fairly remote – there is limited transportation and communication – thus resulting in the residents experiencing poverty and difficult living conditions. Legislation across Nicaragua has upheld the authority of men (Cobo del Arco, 2000). Indeed, influence of the state and patriarchal family values – combined with the culture of machismo – is reflected in literature exploring the attitudes of Nicaraguan citizens concerning rights and violence. In fact, machismo has largely driven gender-based, domestic and sexual violence – leading to institutional and political paternalism (Sternberg, 2000).

In response to some of these issues, Nicaraguan NGO (NNGO, the pseudonym used to refer to the organization involved in this research) was founded in 1994. The main objective of NNGO is to empower young women residing throughout the remote communities where it operates through various initiatives in sport, health and education. In 1999, NNGO started a fútbol program – originally for both young women and men – when they realized the need to focus on the development of young women through sport. Thus, in 2002, NNGO began working to support the sexual and reproductive health rights of these young women and to reduce and prevent gender-based violence through fútbol tournaments and curriculum as tools to connect with young women.

Hayhurst and del Soccoro Centeno Cruz (2019) found that using a postcolonial feminist political ecology PAR research framework, paired with visual methods, was helpful for critically interrogating the embodied experiences of young Nicaraguan women and the nonhuman elements involved in their day-to-day lives (e.g., rocks, landslides, environmental degradation). As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, postcolonial feminist political ecology approaches consider how relations of race, gender, colonialism, and sexuality emerge out of practices related to the physical environment and natural resources by specifically drawing attention to the ways that "multiple forms of power and positionings shape

natural resource struggles" (Mollett, 2017, p. 146). In turn, the authors found that the postcolonial feminist political ecology lens was imperative for heightening the policy issues (e.g., domestic violence prevention and its connection to violence to the land) that were ultimately rooted in the ways that colonialism intersected with racialized and gendered power. For example, a participant – Julissa – in the NNGOs program revealed:

Julissa: I took this photo (see Fig. 1). I was on my way to the football field, to the sports field. About this topic, we have received workshops from [NNGO] related to deforestation, the preservation of the forest. However, there are people that are not interested, and they do this. They chop the trees, so you have deforestation that is huge. They cut down the trees.

LH: So [NNGO] has workshops on this topic?

Julissa: Oh, yes. How to recycle, how is it that we can help to reforest, build up the forest in a place that has been desolated (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 18).

And yet, a number of young women explained how cement barriers they created to prevent landslides from occurring during heavy rains impacted their

Fig. 1. Photograph by Julissa. Untitled.

ability to function as a community. As Hayhurst and del Soccorro Centeno Cruz (2019) write, the concrete barriers could not "replace the trees in battling an increasing rainy season, seldom being able to protect the trees and prevent the landslides that would consistently erode, block, and destroy any roads or pathways the participants hoped to use to attend the [N]NGO's SGD program and flee the violence they often experienced in their homes" (Hayhurst & del Soccorro Centeno Cruz, 2019, p. 18; see also Chapter 6).

The issues highlighted by Julissa above may have otherwise been overlooked if not for a postcolonial feminist orientation to political ecology that opened ways of thinking about "matter" and the nonhuman elements in SDP as in fact agentic and exacerbating inequalities and power relations. In this example, the use of photos offered a possibility for reimagining the ways that the environment and related matter play active roles in – for the case discussed above in Nicaragua – demonstrating how the "prevention of violence to the land and physical environment is deeply enmeshed with preventing violence against young women's bodies, and to broader decolonization efforts – issues that must move to the vanguard of SGD and SDP studies" (Hayhurst & del Soccorro Centeno Cruz, 2019).

A PFPAR approach thus holds the potential to endorse different SDP knowledges and practices by striving to connect – and highlight – academic research on SDP with transformative actions (that may already be taking place) "on the ground" or with a focus on the everyday embodiment of SDP participants and materiality of their experiences. In the case above, this might involve centralizing Indigenous knowledge and the dispossession of land, prioritizing land-based pedagogies and experiences, and dismantling the concept of SDP altogether in favor of reinvigorating Indigenous alternatives. PFPAR approaches hold the potential to draw more explicit attention to how land-based models, culturally appropriate approaches, and knowledge transmission might be undervalued in many Western, white settler approaches and SDP models (see Essa, Arellano, Stuart, & Sheps, 2021).

Using a PFPAR approach means that researcher-participant relations need to be constantly challenged, questioned and discussed. One of the central pillars of this approach is to safeguard the rights and information of those who create, participate and (purportedly) benefit from SDP programs. The goal, then, is to ensure that the entire process is meaningful to them. In this vein, the hope is that participants maintain, and regain, full autonomy and power *with* all aspects of their lives and institutions. Along these lines, Ponic, Reid, and Frisby (2010) discern that "power with" is the ideal approach to working with communities and participants involved in (P)FPAR projects. Such an approach is in contrast to "expert" knowledge approaches that often directly oppose shared control over the research process. Condescending and paternalistic approaches to research end up usurping the possibilities of shared control (Reid et al., 2011). Unfortunately, this might be due to the rules and regulations of funding agencies, thesis supervisors, or institutional mandates that uphold the power and control "over" approach.

The Politics of "Gendered Cultural Translations" in Feminist SDP Research

Using visual methods to examine SDP further complicates the notion of "control." For example, while the aspirations of the PFPAR research that Hayhurst conducted in Nicaragua were to focus on local identities, practices and agendas and to initiate political action through a critical discussion of images taken by young women, challenges pertaining to language, translation, participation and representation arose. The creation of a digital story in the case of NNGO that Hayhurst partnered with presents a key example through which to magnify these issues.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Lyndsay's study involved a partnership with an NNGO based in a remote community in Southern Nicaragua. From the outset, a translator was used – Hayhurst and team were not able to converse in Spanish, especially in the specific dialect used in this remote community. The translator – with whom Lyndsay has worked with for six years – identified as a middle-class, US educated woman who was born in Colombia but who had resided in Nicaragua for the past 30 years. The translator had previously worked with NNGO's key regional partner organization (which is how Lyndsay was introduced to her). Of course, the translator's social position impacted her perceptions of the ways that the young Nicaraguan NNGO program participants interpreted their photos. During the photovoice activities with young women, while they spoke Spanish, the translator simultaneously interpreted in English, which was then digitally recorded and then transcribed (in English).

This research involved semi-structured interviews, photovoice, photocollaging, and digital story sessions with young women who participated in NNGO's SDP programming. A digital story was then developed collaboratively by Lyndsay and the NNGO staff members (see Chapter 6 for further details). The digital story used the visual elements of the research (photos, photocollages, and video footage). The translator had to review the English quotes (which she developed) that corresponded to the themes emerging from the collaborative photoanalysis and photovoice interviews. One of the central themes that emerged from this activity was "child care" – a barrier that the young women wanted to highlight as a significant hindrance to their participation in the NNGO's SGD program. An image used to capture this theme was a container of baby powder (Fig. 2), along with the following quote by Petrilla:

> We have people – girls – that are underage that become pregnant so the children become a problem because then the girls, they cannot go out.

Upon reviewing the digital story, the translator made a number of suggestions and edits, noting that some of the quotes were perhaps misinterpreted. In particular, upon reflecting on the quote above by Petrilla, the translator countered to Lyndsay that she recalled "the tone of the conversations around this topic" and submitted a revised statement in relation to the baby powder photo:

Fig. 2. Photograph by Petrilla. Untitled.

> There are some girls, they are underage and became pregnant, so it's a problem. Now they have to take care of the children and cannot go out.

A key challenge, and point of concern, in this translation process was that it was difficult for Lyndsay to discern the extent to which the translator may have imposed her own assumptions onto the voices of the young women. A number of scholars contend that translation does not have to be perceived as a limitation or a barrier to conducting socially charged, ethical, cross-cultural research (Kim, 2013; Maclean, 2007; Palmary, 2011). Taken a step further – in a PFPAR study such as the example herein – it is crucial that, as Fine et al. (2008) remind us, such issues remind us of "the slippery surface of language, the seductive pull of solidarity, and the terrific sloppiness with which we make names and claims under imperialism" (p. 159). Feminist researchers must be critically aware of the appeal of solidarity, of (cl)aiming to do work with the oppressed, "engage in the too common practice of taking on the charged, contextualized, experienced words of brilliant communities

and stretching them to fit inside their own mouths and own communities" (Fine et al., 2008, p. 159). And yet, the difficulty in the example above is complex: if Lyndsay was fluent in the Nicaraguan Spanish dialect spoken in this particular community, perhaps she may have been able to better understand and "get at" the issues Petrilla was highlighting through this photo and the underlying structural inequalities and gender norms, roles and gendered divisions of labor that contributed to the high rates of pregnancy and lack of childcare experienced by these young women in the first place.

Arguably – and as scholars such as Palmary (2011) contend – thinking more holistically about research as "gendered cultural translation" may provide an opportunity to actually promote and facilitate cross-cultural dialogue and understanding with research participants, but only if the translator's deliberations and decisions are made clear. For example, for Lyndsay's research, also interviewing the translator for the Ugandan study meant she was able to obtain a sound understanding of the translator's perspectives on particular issues relative to the SDP programs. There were a number of opportunities to build strong rapport with both Ugandan and Nicaraguan translators and to continually discuss the word choices used throughout translation. Admittedly, there are still limitations involved in this process – particularly in terms of challenges related to power. As Canella and Manuelito (2008, p. 55) suggest:

> Researchers can no longer be individuals who decide to interview others as if power were not an issue, fool themselves into thinking they are collaborating, or legitimate obtaining research funds from dominant sources with the false pretence that the money can also be used subversively (to counter dominant power).

Indeed, some cross-cultural scholars contend that all research is a form of translation (e.g., Palmary, 2011) and assert that the word choices and decisions made by translators in social science research must be transparent and clearly justified (Creese, Huang, Frisby, & Kambere, 2011; Maclean, 2007). Still, the aforementioned example from Lyndsay's research remains unsettling. The power seemed to reside with the translator – and Lyndsay – as to language use, interpretation, and the ways that this particular image and quote would be represented to the "outside world" – though the young women and NGO staff would decide who would see the image and would verify the accuracy of the quote (Hayhurst, 2017). Much is lost in the power of translation. PFPAR is supposed to be about the power of contestation and helping to unearth the relations that sustain the inequities, imperial relations, and hypercapitalist patriarchy that often folds all too easily into global-local research (see Fine et al., 2008). Herein lies the challenge in using a PFPAR approach, especially when ethical dilemmas arise in terms of language. For how can feminist scholars doing SDP research across multiple sites ensure mutual control over translation as we seek to produce participatory cross-site work that fosters a "'space' open for difference and rely on local knowledge to fill in" (Fine et all., 2008, p. 165)? We suggest, then, that researchers using translation with the goal of facilitating political action and

knowledge mobilization to a broader (global audience) critically consider how decisions should be made by those inside and outside of the community pertaining to the translated language (i.e., Spanish to English).

Another key consideration for PFPAR should be to clearly establish if the goal of the research is to amplify local aspirations and priorities. And if this is the goal, is translation even necessary in the first place? How might it be possible to continue pursuing research that is participatory while also not (re)colonizing through linguicide? We must be cautious about the often "treacherous slide toward homogenization, in the name of solidarity" (Fine et al., 2008, p. 172). Put differently, if using English is an effort to try to tether much of the local SGD work to global political activism, improving young women's sexual and reproductive health rights on a global scale, what is then risked in losing sight of local demands and accountability to the contextual threads of place? In the next section, we further explore ethical conundrums and challenges in pursuing feminist research in and through SDP.

Unequal Power Relations and Feminist Ethical Impasses

> Feminist ethics […] enjoins researchers to constantly interrogate themselves regarding how power in their relationships with others may influence the relationship. Of special concern is the power that researchers hold because of professional status, race, class, or dominant group status. These attributes do not disappear when a researcher engages in collaborative work and must be openly acknowledged as privileges that inevitably produce power inequities.
>
> (Shartrand & Brabeck, 2004, p. 151)

In this section, we build upon the previous discussions to explore concerns pertaining to compensation and power relations in carrying out SDP research on Global North/South aid relations and highlight how the ethical dilemmas that have been brought to bear by feminists and anthropologists have been severely underplayed in SDP scholarship. In short, the concern here is with the ways that the researcher's movements from one site to another (particularly from the Global North to South) relate to broader issues of power and privilege and to "unequal geographies of knowledge and power" (Epstein et al., 2013, p. 479). Swartz (2011) notes that few scholars discern the financial cost of research. Indeed, cost is an ethical issue that must be grappled with, and Swartz highlights that it is crucial to reveal such expenses when carrying out studies in Global South countries, particularly with young people. For Lyndsay, importantly, these "costs" (i.e., a scholarship, grants) contributed to her ability to complete a PhD, publications, awards, recognition, and ultimately a tenure-track position: but those collaborating with her on such studies did not receive comparable rewards or benefits.

A postcolonial feminist reflexive analysis should bring such questions and power relations to bear on any study that (cl)aims to be working within this global-local fulcrum. This is especially important in order to prioritize transparency, accountability, while recognizing the relational subjectivities of researchers, practitioners and "beneficiaries." In short, a postcolonial ethic to feminist research is essential for confronting imperialism and colonialism as the "present history" (cf., Roy, 2006) of SDP and its broader embedment in global imperialist legacy. Such concerns tie to Ananya Roy's focus on the discipline of planning and its role in liberal benevolence to move instead toward an "ethics of postcoloniality." In the section that follows, we draw on Hayhurst's research with UNGO in an effort to unpack methodological encounters, where a risk of being an "academic who perpetuated oppressive practices" was tangible and of particular concern (Chrisp, 2004, p. 88).

The vision of UNGO is to create an environment where Ugandan women and children are free from violence and oppression and where everyone has the opportunity to realize their full potential. UNGO has multiple programming areas and departments and employs over 100 staff members both directly and indirectly. Staff positions range from "monitoring and evaluation officer" to "child rights officer." UNGO also provides access to various social services in the region of Winita (a pseudonym used to protect the identity of this community). UNGO's SDP initiative is a program that commenced in early 2009, and its funding is shared between INGO and an international aid agency. The goal of the SDP program is to use martial arts training alongside "gender education" sessions, which aim to assist girls' skill development in the realms of conflict management, sexual relations and domestic violence (Hayhurst, 2016). The program also addresses the marginalization of adolescent young women (ages 10–18) in Uganda through karate and taekwondo to improve their status, increase their education and augment gender relations in the communities in which they live. The young women interviewed for this research were of the ages 16–18 and volunteered for UNGO staff through their work as martial arts trainers throughout their communities and during after-school programming. Thus far, the initiative has reached over 2,000 girls and young women who benefit directly through education provided through sport, GAD programming. A goal of the program is to train some of the participants as leaders in their communities, particularly in the areas of gender and sport. The martial arts program is not formally part of the school curriculum, but takes place after school hours on school grounds.

Using a PFPAR approach means that relations between the "researcher" and the "re-searched" need to be consistently questioned, challenged and discussed. Here, the words of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) – who infamously stated "re-search is a dirty word" – ring loud and clear. Tuhiwai Smith's hyphenation of "research" into "re-search" problematizes and underlines how "re-searching" is not merely about harmlessly pursuing knowledge. Conducting re-search is deeply tied to relations between the imperial and colonial project and holds (un)intended consequences for those who are the researched. Much of these relations are shaped by unequal power over the research process – in all phases of research – from the research question design to study implementation, analysis, and dissemination of findings (Metzler et al., 2003). Arguably, PAR is supposed to

adhere to such principles: the goal is to facilitate shared, collective and reciprocal research. And yet, some counter that by using a PAR approach, researchers are creating "false illusions of equity or beliefs that the local is countering the global" (Canella & Manuelito, 2008, p. 55).

There are some PAR studies – particularly in the realm of SDP – that attempt to heighten "the local," despite being part of vast and broader global multisited approaches (Collison et al., 2016; Hayhurst, 2016; Sherry, Schulenkorf, Seal, Nicholson, & Hoye, 2017). Along these lines, there have been a number of "local" (often Global South) community-based researchers working with translators and Global South community-based research teams partnering with Global North scholars. In the realm of SDP – which is often characterized by cross-cultural, multisited approaches and relations – scholars have often highlighted the tenuous and multifaceted relations that necessitate heightened reflexivity, decolonizing approaches and researcher responsibility (Chawansky, 2015; Darnell, Giulianotti, Howe, & Collison, 2018; Forde, 2015; McSweeney, 2019). Key concerns highlighted through these multisited PAR approaches include: (1) a false separation between collecting data with communities under an elusive premise of equity or a "belie[f] that the local is countering the global" (Canella & Manuelito, 2008, p. 55); and (2) a lack of shared control over the full research process, including challenges pertaining to the view that "the marginalized have a moral right to own and control knowledge produced about them" (Swartz, 2011, p. 48). Although PAR studies are supposed to include collaborative steps meant to flatten power relations – including co-designing the decision-making processes, defining principles of collaboration, and setting shared priorities (Westhues et al., 2008) – such benefits are often fraught with complications related to what Ponic et al. (2010) refer to as "power with" as opposed to "power over" others involved in feminist PAR approaches. Inevitably, FPAR scholars point to the ways that centralized, hyperpatriarchal "expert knowledge" approaches often directly undermine more collaborative aspirations for sharing decision-making and control over the entire research process.

The aforementioned issues seem particularly crucial to grapple with as Lyndsay struggled to navigate the ultimately "transactional processes" involved in conducting research. For example, the following costs are examples of items that were research expenses while Hayhurst was in Eastern Uganda: (1) fuel for UNGO's vehicle from Junita to the Entebbe airport; (2) driver's two days allowance; (3) driver's night allowance; (4) airport fee; (5) fuel to attend martial arts training sessions; (6) wear and tear of UNGO's vehicle; and (7) food and water for/shared with UNGO staff while traveling in remote places.[1] Throughout the fieldwork, Hayhurst ended up obtaining transportation to and from the airport with UNGO because it was difficult to find reliable public transportation from the airport to Winita – the rural community where the research took place. Second, UNGO senior staff insisted that they were already picking up UNGO's

[1]Junita is a fictional name of the region where UNGO worked used to protect the identity of NGO/participants.

co-founder the same day that Hayhurst arrived, so they would not be making the extra trip. Still, Hayhurst thought it was important to pay for the exorbitant fuel costs involved, as well as vehicle maintenance fees, given the distance traveled (230km one way from the airport to Junita, for a total round trip of 460km). This was the same case with small field trips throughout the broader Junita community to connect with the young martial arts trainers as they practiced karate and taekwondo. Lyndsay felt it was imperative to pay for fuel and use of UNGO's vehicle, particularly when transportation was such a privilege for UNGO, and it was extremely difficult for them to obtain funding for transport purposes: a clear example of the white privilege Hayhurst acknowledged held. Indeed, the role of feminist ethics is to lay bare such uncomfortable power inequities.

During travels to the more remote areas of Junita, Lyndsay recalls that – if they stopped to purchase food and water from one of the local markets – she would often buy enough for the UNGO staff she was with at that particular time so it could be shared. But do these modest research expenses support Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) contentions that those conducting research cross-culturally should try to contribute skills and resources to the community in which one works, while also being generous where possible to address power imbalances? Paying for food while doing research with community members seems like a weak attempt to try to facilitate reciprocity, especially because in many respects, being "generous" (if this is even what the act may be characterized by) simply (re)affirmed Lyndsay's place as white, middle-class, Western researcher. Indeed, this act in itself could be construed as an example of neocolonialism.

Nonetheless, the concern lies in ways that spending money on research participants is different from paying people for their participation, which may be problematic (Archer, 2009; Swartz, 2011). To this end, Archer (2009, p. 157) discussed "opportunities for reciprocity" and "reciprocal relationships," through which she maintains it as important for researchers to "truly level out the inherent power differential." As she noted, these opportunities include "the collaborative nature of the relationship, a base of empathy and mutual respect, and the researcher's explicit acknowledgment that both people have skills and knowledge to contribute, with the participants' knowledge of research questions being greater" (Archer, 2009, p. 157). Lyndsay shared stories, food, conversation, and long, sweaty car rides with staff from UNGO. During her stay in Winita, Lyndsay attended birthday celebrations, breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and events in which UNGO participated. Reciprocal gift giving also occurred in one instance, as Lyndsay brought a gift of Canadian maple syrup to a research participant's (referred to using the pseudonym "Liz") birthday celebration. Liz cooked a large meal that she shared with Lyndsay and kindly gave her a bottle of soda and some sweets following their meal. The daylong celebration ended by sitting in a circle and sharing the things that we were most grateful for and why having Liz as part of our lives was important to each of us (Field Notes, November 25, 2009). Lyndsay felt extremely honored to have been invited to this celebration – yet also uncomfortable – as the 15 other attendees were family members and close friends from the community.

Nevertheless, following this event, Lyndsay found herself questioning its meaning in terms of her position as a researcher, particularly from the lens of feminist ethics in PFPAR. For ethical reasons, Lyndsay was clear to Liz and the others in attendance during this celebration that she was still wearing her "researcher's hat" by openly discussing the study at hand, though Lyndsay did not take any formal field notes during the event. To be sure, Lyndsay was unsure as to how she could truly "remove" her identity from these occasions outside the study context. Indeed, removing this label (white, middle-class, Canadian researcher) would be impossible. Undoubtedly, Lyndsay has, and will continue to, benefit more from this research than the UNGO staff who participated in this study, through publications (such as this very book!), conference presentations and other outputs: a power imbalance that seems challenging to rectify. In these ways, Lyndsay's subjectivity in relation to her choices of field sites was paramount in relation to her access to the field and choices in collecting data (Epstein et al., 2013). It seems, then, that such experiences were not aligned with a feminist ethic, one that requires individuals to "walk the difficult line between sharing knowledge and expertise without asserting superiority or unreflexively using power against anyone who is subordinate because of status, gender, race, individual differences and so forth" (Shartrand & Brabeck, 2004, p. 140). Shartrand and Brabeck (2004, p. 141) continue to suggest that a feminist ethic is supposed to ensure the researcher "act[s] in ways that proactively create just social structures that ensure that people receive attentive and just care." Much of the aforementioned examples connect to embodied encounters and feminist (care) ethics in SDP – an issue to which we now turn.

Feminist Research, Reflexivity and Ethics of Care

In this final section, we critically consider the ways that we, as researchers, academics and feminists, are (re-)constituted through our research practices in relation to the choices we make, particularly when embarking on certain research practices. Focusing on such issues not only extends the various concerns pertaining to relationships, reflexivity and embodiment outlined above but also underlines the utility of feminist ethics of care (Raghuram, 2019). It is essential here to account for how one is implicated in, and produced through, research practices – and more still, why our SDP research is feminist. As Shepherd writes (2016, p. 7):

> Is it enough that I espouse, overtly and publicly, a feminist politics? Is it enough that I am attentive to the dynamics of gendered power? That I am always looking to understand better how gendered power operates in any given discursive terrain, including the terrains in/through which I am produced as a subject: the academy, the research encounter, the journal article, the meandering discussions over dinner with friends?

These questions of self-reflection are central to helping us engage in a critical examination of all the cumulative strands that create our individual and community identity and experiences. Thinking through how various elements of identity (e.g., gender, race, class, educational attainment, sexual orientation, disability status, age, nationality, etc.) influence and shape our experiences – especially in relation to power and privilege – is critical for anchoring the ways hierarchies (both external and internal to our research settings) ultimately play a role in knowledge production. Nonetheless, it seems that performatively rehearsing one's social position and romanticizing reflexivity as a cure-all (Pringle & Thorpe, 2017), or a "green light," for continuing to pursue fieldwork "over there" (in this case, in the Global South) presents challenges. Is being "hyper-self-reflexive," as Kapoor suggests, helpful when Global North researchers carry out studies in Global South contexts? Does such an approach result in Global North researchers being better able to "contextualize our claims, reduc[e] the risk of personal arrogance or geoinstitutional imperialism, and mov[e] one toward a non-hierarchical encounter with the Third World/subaltern" (Kapoor, 2004, p. 641)?

Nagar (2014) extends this idea by contemplating the possibilities of "radical vulnerability" (to which Megan alluded to earlier in this chapter) and "situated solidarities" (p. 12). Continuing, Nagar explains that "a commitment to cultivate radical vulnerability through situated solidarities demands that we grapple with the material and symbolic politics of our locations and imagine how researchers might play a role in evolving ethics and methodologies in order to seek to build dialogues across borders" (Nagar, 2014, p. 12). And yet, scholars such as Haraway (1998, p. 584) caution researchers that "there is a serious danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their positions." These issues of power, privilege and position must actively be grappled with in studies that (cl)aim to use a feminist ethic of care in approaching research on SDP.

Indeed, as feminist Global North researchers conducting fieldwork in Global South contexts, it seems that, though we are encouraged to be reflexive in order to "acknowledg[e] social location and its impact on knowledge creation … [in order to] generate more equitable collaborations with communities" (Creese & Frisby, 2011 p. 236), we are less encouraged to untangle the complex and messy realities of the "between space." This "between space" is one that operates at the intersection of the self-other nexus (Fine, 1994; MacDonald, 2020). This space is one that we encourage feminist SDP researchers to explore – in all its multiplicities, messiness and discomfort – in order to reveal the nuances, tensions and challenges involved in pursuing feminist research.

Using postcolonial feminist theory provides the opportunity for opening up a space for social transformation and justice that is rooted in ethics and responsibility, recognizing that multisited SDP research must be situated and not become "yet another act of colonization" (Fine et al., 2008, p. 174). The hope for feminist SDP studies is that the consequences of systematic structural and symbolic violence will not only be "known," but ultimately minimized through the research process. Indeed, and as Milne (2012) contends, it is dangerous to suggest that "the people who participate in [participatory research approaches] are socially

excluded, powerless, and vulnerable, and that through their participation they will somehow become empowered and find their voice" (p. 257). At the same time, and as Shepherd (2016) points out, many SDP scholars benefit from being "an academic" proficient in the "languages of evaluation," who is produced by research, then is further (re)produced by peer-reviewed publications, which then helps in securing competitive funding to then reproduce the next grant application, article, or book (the book at hand presents an almost ironic example).

Although we have found it difficult to fully address such power inequities during our various research processes, some efforts have included co-authoring with community-based collaborators (see Chapters 3 and 6); co-presenting conference papers with Global South scholars and practitioners (see Hayhurst, Otte, McSweeney, & Wilson, 2019); and ensuring the research questions driving grants are collaborative and community-driven. At the end of the day, however, we acknowledge ongoing and unaddressed power inequities (i.e., we are often PI on grants, and we continue to benefit from secure employment) that have yet to be adequately navigated and explicitly addressed during the research process. Here, local knowledge also risks being romanticized through participatory approaches and further solidifies unequal power relations (Reid & Frisby, 2008). Further challenges arise when there are a number of stakeholders involved in such projects that – despite striving to be informed by PFPAR approaches – may be overtly challenged in attempting to truly uphold the conception of "co-researchers." This is especially apparent when participants are distant from the decision-making process (e.g., when the grant funding agency is located in the Global North, with research being carried out in the Global South). In an attempt to reconcile these challenges, some PAR project scholars suggest:

> While we cannot always expect participants to see themselves as action researchers, we can make clear that we are engaging them in a mutual investigation and learning process. The framework of learning is the core concept that will enable participants to confront political realities, consider redirecting power, and recognize the value of multiple interests.
>
> (Martin, 2008, p. 396)

The language of "mutuality" – propped up by terms such as "shared," "collaborative" and "partnership" – is often found scattered throughout feminist-guided PAR studies and deserves to be critically unpacked and revisited throughout the research process.

Final Thoughts and Future Trajectories

> There is not one specific method or combination of methods that necessarily makes research "feminist," but rather that the research comes from an approach that is considerate of the multifaceted nature of gender.
>
> (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007, p. 199)

The words of Beetham and Demetriades still ring true: having done research in SGD/SDP collectively for almost 15 years, we concur that there is no monolithic way to "do" feminist research or to translate and apply these principles to our work. Being aware of the significant critiques of development work have given us the tools to reconcile uncomfortable truths about the choices we have made in our research. We continue to grapple, sweat through and ponder the directions of our research journeys. We continue to question how and why we contribute to these lines of inquiry and reflect on the decisions and critical junctures we have navigated along the way. And yet, we want to embrace cautious optimism as we forge ahead: guided by our feminist principles; embracing the meaningful yet complex relationships we have developed; and upholding the reciprocity, radical, and vulnerable reflexivity and feminist ethics of care we openly embrace as we stumble along the way.

For each of us, building trusting, mutual and reciprocal relationships has been instrumental in steering us through challenging and uncomfortable discussions, fieldwork and unchartered research waters. Whether it is working with our community partners, staff, practitioners and leaders of SGDs, NGOs, governmental organizations, policymakers or our students, it remains imperative to approach such collaborations with a careful and delicate balance between our feminist values and our understanding of the need for working together to build toward social change. Navigating our roles and responsibilities as feminist scholars means that we must work to identify, examine and support process of change when we observe (intentionally or unintentionally) inequities and injustices in SGD, whether this be in board meetings, examining policy documents, or in the field. But as Olive and Thorpe (2011) have explained, navigating our feminist selves within male-dominated sporting or organizational cultures can be very difficult. Not everyone wants to hear our concerns or to be faced with uncomfortable truths. Yet, we have found that building trusting relationships with our research partners (across all levels of the field), speaking out and disseminating our research beyond (the relatively safe spaces of) academic journals and books, and educating our undergraduate and postgraduate students are all ways that we can practice our feminist ethics in the work that we do.

What we are arguing for, in conjunction with Abu-Lughod (2002, p. 789), is using critical feminist research ethics and values in and through SGD in order to build transnational, mutual solidarity, in respecting difference and using a more "egalitarian language of alliances, coalitions, and solidarity, instead of salvation." Mutuality also means recognizing that those carrying out research on SGD need to be reflexive, humble and radically vulnerable (Nagar, 2014). Vulnerable and humble reflexivity should begin with the researcher and situating one's social location and position historically in relation to project "beneficiaries" (Rankin, 2010). We contend that there is always an opportunity to do more of this through our research in SGD. We suggest, then, that it is crucial to carefully consider the importance of a postcolonial, embodied research ethic that acknowledges and openly engages with the geopolitical, material, and historical divides between SGD programmers, "targeted beneficiaries" and critics, while also trying to locate

common ground and shared mutuality. By foregrounding these issues, particularly through decolonizing, embodied, autoethnographic, and/or participatory action-driven research, perhaps the journey of ethically charged, responsible SGD research will endure. As Gibson-Graham (2006, p. 6) motions:

> Focused on the glass half empty rather than half full, [an] angry and sceptical political sensibility is seldom if ever satisfied… If we are to make the shift from victimhood to potency, from judgment to enactment, from protest to positive projects, we also need to work on the moralistic stance that clings to a singular conception of power and blocks experimentation with power in its many forms.

And so, ultimately, we are admitting that feminist research in sport for development is challenging, and we find ourselves constantly navigating between hope and optimism ("glass half full") and despair ("glass half empty"). Such ongoing tensions are part of the process of "staying with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016). For the most part, in this chapter, we have tried not to offer easy answers and predictable pathways, but rather to put forth some of the key contradictions and tensions uncovered through our work. Feminist approaches to sport, gender and development cannot only be about criticism. There needs to be room for hope, for igniting political imagination, and for recognizing the limits to hegemonic power. Individually and collectively, we may be able to accomplish this by committing to more ethical, relational, and responsible SGD practices in our research, teaching, advocacy, politics and praxis.

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Chapter 3

Economic Empowerment in Sport, Gender and Development

with Payoshni Mitra

As a group, adolescent girls of the Global South face a number of challenges that are acknowledged by programming efforts such as the UN's Girl Up, Plan International's Girls Get Equal, and the Nike Foundation's Girl Effect (see Chapter 1 for more information on the Girl Effect). Many of these programs argue that changing girls' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors will ultimately help to change the world (Grosser & van der Gaag, 2013). Within these campaigns and accompanying media content, the typically stated aims are to address early marriage traditions, to increase access to education, to eliminate gender-based violence (GBV), or to educate on sexual and reproductive health. All of these issues limit girls' potential "power" in significant ways, and therefore "empowerment" is presented as the overarching goal. Thus, programming is offered that will help girls become empowered, often defined as "assertive, dynamic, and unbound from the constraints of passive femininity" (Gonick, 2006, p. 2). Depending on the vision of the program, this empowerment can take different shapes, but it is largely individualized.

Scholars – both within and outside of SGD – have expressed broad concerns with the move toward the individualization of girls' empowerment and the accompanying co-opting of feminist ideals, language, and values (see, for example, Banet-Weiser, 2018). We will not repeat these important arguments here. Instead, we will use this chapter to delve more deeply into the notion of *economic* empowerment for girls and women with SGD projects. In particular, we highlight the complexities of economic empowerment sessions and messages by exploring how adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) within the Goal-Delhi project made sense of economic progress and possibilities in their own lives. Through exploring these ideas as manifested in the lives of AGYW, we seek to demonstrate how critical feminist perspectives might offer new insights into the construct of economic empowerment as it is deployed within SGD scholarship,

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programming, and practice. This chapter will also add new considerations to the research on role models in SGD (Meier, 2015; Meier & Saavedra, 2009) and introduce how, why, and where gendered perspectives on urbanization come to matter. To help situate this analysis, the next section explores the rationales and logic underpinning economic empowerment and employability initiatives within SDP and SGD.

Economic Empowerment Initiatives within SDP and SGD

There are a range of projects within SGD and SDP that seek to work on issues of economic empowerment, employability, livelihoods, and social entrepreneurship.[1] Additionally, key transnational SDP stakeholders such as Laureus, streetfootballworld, and Women Win engage with these concepts in their aim to support SDP projects in a range of contexts. For instance, employability is one of the six social focus areas for the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation (2020). Their objective in this area is to help youth acquire "skills and create [-ing] pathways to employment" cognizant that "the global economic recession means that young people are going to find it much harder to transition into employment without vocational skills" (LSFG, Annual Review, n.p). Of note here is the focus on individual upskilling and less on alterations to the larger economic structures and systems that contributed to the global recession.

Other multilateral entities offer more targeted approaches to this type of work. For example, streetfootballworld has worked on issues of employability since 2015 and positions football as an innovative solution to the immediate and potential long-term challenges by youths who are NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). They suggest that being "stuck" with a NEET status can have short-term and long-term implications for a person's "career and well-being" (Schlenker & Braun, 2020, p. 10). They specifically seek to identify and support young people who are NEET by offering guidance to practitioners on teaching "17 key life skills for employability" through football (Schlenker & Braun, 2020, p. 20). Their "Scoring for the Future: Developing Life Skills for Employability" toolkit states that "life skills are those abilities that help to promote social and economic well-being, positive health and productive development," and the toolkit posits that these life skills can be taught through football (Schlenker & Braun, 2020, p. 20). The life skills include attributes such as goal setting, adaptability, and self-control. While a focus on individual change resembles the Laureus approach, of further interest for this chapter is that the toolkit does not identify unique employability challenges that AGYW might encounter. The toolkit's acknowledgment of gender consists of general statements about gender equality and inclusion within the activities designed to build life skills.

[1]Though these concepts can vary considerably, we group them together in this chapter. See McSweeney, Oxford, Spaaij, and Hayhurst (2020) for a more intentional discussion of the key differences.

Fortunately, Women Win and their related brand, Win-Win Strategies, does offer a vision and roadmap of economic empowerment for girls and SGD programs. Women Win works within a number of partnerships and frameworks to support sport and play-based life skills programming. This programming identifies and addresses a range of themes and issues pertinent to the lives of AGYW. Their desire to connect life skills, sport, and economic empowerment for AGYW is articulated through their "Girls in Motion" Playbook (Women Win Learning Lab, 2021). While similar to the premise in the streetfootballworld toolkit, this playbook more distinctly notes that sport can help address issues related to economic empowerment in girls because it "challenge[-s] gender roles within the community by giving opportunities to girls" and "accelerate[-s] leadership development by providing girls with the opportunity to build self-esteem, courage and self-efficacy" (p. 55). Additional documents on their website display a comprehensive understanding of economic empowerment for girls and women:

> Economic resilience and justice are not possible for a woman if she is unable to control her body, life, and future. This impacts not only her own health and rights, but also her job prospects, economic potential, and the prosperity of her family, community, and country. While an increasing number of companies understand the importance of economically empowering women across value chains, their focus is often narrowly on providing skills, training, or resources. Rarely are other key "*building blocks*" to sustainable economic empowerment and resilience are [*sic*] considered, such as control over reproductive health, freedom from sexual harassment and other gender-based violence, access and control over economic resources, or the burden of unpaid care work (Women Win, The Problem, italics added).

Importantly, this statement recognizes many of the unique barriers for girls and women in employment contexts. Further, it offers important nuance to the notion of girls' and women's economic empowerment, noting that interventions must occur across the lifespan and at appropriate times in an AGYW's life.

As presented by Women Win, equipping women and girls to productively engage in a workplace or with employment must be accompanied by attention to dimensions of her life that often make employment and employability a challenge or unsustainable. This can include gendered expectations around (unpaid) care work, gendered divisions of labor, sexual harassment, transportation/mobility difficulties, and GBV. Plan International's policy position paper on economic empowerment of girls and women reinforces the idea that a lifecycle approach must be taken when advocating for girls and women. Support must be provided at each phase of life, and interventions should (ideally) start by challenging gender stereotypes and discrimination early in a girl's life. When girls are denied opportunities for education and training early in life, they are "more likely to be forced into informal, insecure and low paid work that puts them at increased risk

of poverty and abuse" (Plan International, p. 5). Plan International's articulation of the employment barriers and challenges across the lifespan helps to locate employability issues within the broader context of an AGYW's life. The next section looks more closely at the ideas surrounding AGYW's economic empowerment and the concerns of feminist scholars.

Commercialized Feminism: Girls as Untapped (Economic) Potential

> Girls are the world's greatest untapped resource. Investments in girls have significant economic returns. These returns have the power to uplift entire economies.
>
> (Girleffect.org, 2012)

As referenced in Chapter 1, campaigns like the Girl Effect suggest that positive social change will begin once girls receive equal access to education, training, and opportunities. Until then, these campaigns warn us that girls are merely "untapped" economic resources for their families, communities, countries, and, indeed, the world. Many who make the case for investing in the economic empowerment of AGYW argue that it is "smarter economics" to do so because of the return girls can provide on invested (international) development dollars. Scholars have even coined the term "Girl Effect Dividend" to highlight the payout that occurs from targeted investment in AGYW; they have also calculated the opportunity costs of diverting resources away from girls (Chaaban & Cunningham, 2011).

While other chapters in this book will examine the links between girls, sport, and empowerment (broadly defined), this chapter seeks to look specifically at economic empowerment programming in SGD projects. The use of the term "empowerment" in international development has been critically interrogated by scholars such as Batliwala (2010) and Cornwall and Rivas (2015). Batliwala (2010) communicates our chief concern with this terminology: it has been instrumentalized and come to represent an individual "magic bullet for poverty alleviation and rapid economic development, rather than a multifaceted process of social transformation, especially in the arena of gender equality" (p. 116). We also suggest that the shift from understanding empowerment as a multifaceted and layered process to an individualized state of mind/being is reflected in many SGD projects (Heywood, 2007). For example, the Goal-Delhi project, which utilizes "sports and life skills to empower and equip young girls … to be integral economic leaders in their families, communities and societies," is one such project (Standard Chartered Bank, 2019, para. 1). The Goal-Delhi project combines sport training with sessions on financial literacy and employability with the stated goal to make girls "more active economic participants in their communities" (Manneh, cited in Standard Chartered Bank, 2019, para. 7). The quest to use sports to help AGYW develop into economic actors who will save their families invites critical reflection. Interrogating the idea of AGYW as savers (of money)

and "saviors" for their communities calls forward the application of commercialized feminism.

According to Goodkind (2009), "commercialized feminism emerges at the intersection of neoliberalism with feminist ideals; it is characterized by its focus on the individual, self-reliance, and personal responsibility for change" (p. 397). This approach differs from feminist theories and agendas that seek to transform or upend societal norms and customs to improve the lives of girls and women. Put differently, the solution to the current "problem" (in terms of AGYW's inability to succeed economically) is not to fix or modify the economic systems and structures in place. Instead, in campaigns such as the Girl Effect and many SGD programs that focus on economic empowerment, "what is packaged for women to use will also shape them into the kind of citizens needed for the successful functioning of the neoliberal state" (Goodkind, 2009, p. 400). Girls' studies scholars note similar concerns with how AGYW and empowerment is framed in the current moment. Harris's (2004) work on the "future girl" highlights that AGYW are seen to be "flush with the gains of feminism, embarking on new education and career paths" and are "perfect candidates for a subjectivity built around self-invention, dynamism and capacity for change" (p. 44). While Harris (2004) refers to girls of the Global North in these instances, it is clear that some of these sensibilities manifest in the girl-centered campaigns and SGD programming that extends to the Global South. Indeed, the imagery and media content associated with the Girl Effect campaign deliver a visible and tangible notion of the "the flexible, self-made worker [that] … young women are imagined and encouraged to be" (Harris, 2004, p. 44).

The primary concern of these framings of AGYW's lives and futures rests with the way in which the onus is put on (individual) girls to bear the responsibility for families, communities, and economic change. Even with additional education and training, most AGYW will likely not be positioned to succeed in their existing social, economic, and political structures. Moreover, when AGYW fail to succeed, these failures will be assigned to them as individuals and not cast as failures of the larger structural systems in which they must try to operate. To further compound the situation, the (commercialized) "feminist" values of individual responsibility and self-reliance will be used against them in complex ways. That is, they will likely take up the language and perspectives of commercialized feminism to recognize and describe their own experiences and explain their shortcomings.

Goal-Delhi and the Global Urban

The lives of the AGYW who participated in this research were/are shaped by the larger contexts of urbanization, industrialization, globalization, internal migration, environmental degradation, and the gendered dimensions of mobilities in India (Chawansky & Schlenker, 2016). While this chapter cannot adequately address all of these forces, it will signpost one in particular – urbanization – as it relates to AGYW's economic empowerment in Delhi.

Considerations of the global urban and the process of urbanization are important for SDP research; a 2018 UN report predicts that "two out of every

three people are likely to be living in cities or other urban centers" by 2050 (UN, para. 1). These changes are tied to population growth, shifting demographics, and political will. The report notes that most of these megacities will be located in the Global South, and that New Delhi is projected to become the most populous city on the planet by 2028 (UN, 2018). Of note is that these stressed and stretched urban centres will not be sites of material prosperity because most "extreme poverty is concentrated in urban spaces, and national and city governments alike are struggling to accommodate the rising population in these areas" (UN-Habitat, n.d, para. 6). Scholars have explained the larger political will and context of these shifts in Delhi which offers some insights into the lives and backstories of the AGYW who took part in the research (see Bhan, 2009; Das & Walton, 2015). To move beyond Delhi and study these impending changes more generally, explorations of urbanization should consider both the implications of the physical movement from (in this case study) villages to cities and also the inevitable shifts in lifestyle choices and attitudes that accompany these migrations. Nuanced explorations of the urban poor and their experiences – especially in light of expected global population shifts – have been mostly underexplored in the SDP academic literature (Gruneau, 2016).

Feminist scholars have also called for more attention to analyses of urbanization and the global urban in light of the aforementioned projections (Peake, 2016). Peake (2016) puts forth a spirited call for feminist scholars to move into complex terrain within this research, arguing that:

> A feminist intervention … requires moving beyond the problematic categories that modernist/developmentalist approaches to understanding the urban South and North have created, to engage more fully with the everyday struggles of living and working that animate urban dwellers and the complex scaffolding upon which the vast majority of the world's women living in cities, the working poor, pin their hopes and dreams.
>
> (p. 225)

Our analysis of the participants in the Goal-Delhi initiative attempts to pay particular attention to this understanding of urbanization. It moves beyond Phadke's (2013) observation that, for girls and women, "cities are often seen as spaces of noise, dust, speed and worse, as locations of vice and violence. The city [then] is the space of excitement rather than calmness, of risk rather than safety" (p. 52). Instead, our research draws much-needed attention to the multiple ways urban spaces create new considerations and negotiations for program participants whose families had migrated to Delhi from various states in India. The research takes seriously their hopes, dreams, fears, and observations of living in urban Delhi.

In our analysis, we attempted to both straddle the local urban (Delhi) context and provide commentary on new understandings of the global urban for AGYW around the world. Where and when relevant, we provide contextual information on the lives of the girls in Delhi to help readers understand and interpret their words as they were shared with us. For example, the participants' beliefs in the

potential danger that awaited them as (newer) residents of urban Delhi resonate not only with typical understandings of the urban for girls and women but also with the global attention on the December 2012 gang rape and murder of Nirbhaya in South Delhi. Nirbhaya was a female student who was attacked while simply riding a bus with a friend, and the proximity of this violence weighed heavily on the minds of the participants and their families during our data collection in 2013–2014 (What is Nirbhaya case, 2019).

Yet, for as much danger that (potentially) awaited these AGYW in their urban lives, they expressed a willingness and hopefulness to craft a life narrative that would be decidedly different from those previously available to girls and women in their families. In our analysis below, we highlight some of these complex understandings of what the AGYW involved in our research thought was possible, mindful that challenging stereotypical gendered conventions and expectations are often seen as a first step toward economic empowerment. Our analysis outlines the ways that AGYW experienced the lessons from the program, as well as the negotiations they made and anticipated as "empowered" young women in urban Delhi.

Introducing Goal-Delhi

At the time this research was conducted, the program under study was referred to as "Goal-Delhi."[2] During our research, the Goal program was an endeavor supported by Standard Chartered Bank and Women Win, and the content and sport training sessions were delivered through a partnership with the Naz Foundation Trust in India. The Goal-Delhi program combined the sport of netball with life skills activity guides on health and hygiene (title: Be Healthy), communication skills and confidence (title: Be Yourself), rights and freedom from violence (title: Be Empowered), and financial literacy (title: Be Money Savvy). The Goal program was piloted in India in 2006, and at the time of this research (2013–2014), it operated in many schools across three large cities in India: Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai. Delhi was selected as our research site because of its long-standing commitment to Goal programming. One school-based site within the Goal-Delhi program was selected as the research location because of the support of the school principal and the previous success of this particular location. At present, there is related SGD programming housed within the Young People's Initiatives area that blends life skills and netball, but these initiatives were not a part of this research.

This data collection and larger research project was co-led by Megan, who was based in the United Kingdom at the time, and Payoshni, who was based in India at the time (Chawansky & Mitra, 2015, 2018). For ease, we locate the research in Delhi, but in reality, the data collection and analysis took place in various cities in India and England, as well as in virtual spaces. Despite some inevitable challenges

[2]Currently, it is listed as a part of the Young People's Initiatives at the Naz Foundation (India) Trust, a Delhi-based NGO.

along the way, our research partnership allowed us to bring complementary demeanors, skills, and perspectives to the project. We designed a qualitative case study approach to explore how the AGYW participants experienced the program and its intended broad aim of empowerment. The larger research project sought to understand if and how the direct beneficiaries – the AGYW participants – experienced the program and its intended aim of empowerment. Put differently, the research aspired to better understand the impact and benefit of the program curriculum and the netball trainings from the perspectives of the AGYW involved. In this chapter, we turn our attention only to the themes/activities related to economic empowerment. Some might fairly argue that the notion of economic empowerment is difficult to parse out from the other modules. We would concur, but suggest that a focused look at the conversations of economic empowerment reveals important insights into how girls might understand their future lives and (economic) possibilities in urban Delhi.

We followed a purposeful sample of 14 AGYW (aged 12–16) who were active at one Goal-Delhi project site. Primary data collection occurred at the beginning (November 2013), middle (April 2014) and end (August 2014) of the project in an attempt to capture the changes that occurred for girls as they participated in the program. We must note that the sample of girls who participated in this research project all served as classroom monitors, which means that they had some additional responsibilities to assist with school-related tasks and were likely seen as leaders by their peers. As such, they could be perceived as more ambitious or engaged in school and school-related activities in light of their roles as monitors. This should be taken into consideration while reviewing the analysis.

The Goal-Delhi program typically follows a 10-month cycle, with Community Sport Coaches (CSCs) generally coming to a school (or community site) twice per week to deliver netball and life skills trainings to a select group of students. The CSCs were older (than the AGYW) and, in most instances, had gone through the Goal program themselves. This is important to note. The CSCs were visible role models for the AGYW; they were from India and many lived in the local communities that served the programs. That said, there was a mixed response when we inquired about if and how the CSCs helped to support and mentor the AGYW outside of the regular sessions, so we must point out that this is our use of the term role model here.

The research visits included the analysis of key program documents (document analysis), participation in and observation of sport trainings and events (participant observation), creative methodologies (artwork and small group work), focus group and semi-structured interviews with the AGYW. We also interviewed various stakeholders affiliated with the organization, met with others in the SDP/sport sector in India to discuss our initial findings and observations, and visited the Goal offices in Mumbai to get an understanding of how the project operated in different settings. All interviews with the Goal participants were conducted by Dr. Payoshni Mitra in Hindi, recorded, and then translated into English by Mitra. Parental/guardian consent to participate was received for all those who were interviewed.

It is important to provide guidance here on how the excerpts below should be read and understood. The objective of the research project was to gather insights

from girls on how they thought the Goal program inspired change in their own lives, but this question did not limit itself to program-specific information. The participants steered the conversations, and often this included discussions of larger changes at home, within their families, or in society. Their insights did not necessarily refer to program content, and we did not force the conversations to do so. Of note, we did not witness specific elements of the financial literacy portion of the program being taught to the girls of the study, so our questions on this topic were discussed in more circuitous ways. Additionally, it is important to state that the excerpts below do not necessarily represent key themes within the larger research project. Instead, they offer insights into the complexities of economic empowerment messages by exploring how the girls within this study understood and made sense of economic progress and possibilities in their own lives. The extended excerpts and dialogue try to provide insight into the mindset of the girls on these issues.

In the subsections that follow, we are able to highlight the short-term impacts of the Goal-Delhi project for the AGYW who participated in our research. We present findings from our third field visit, in August 2014, during a 5-day visit to the school. The insights from this field visit were chosen for a closer analysis because the AGYW appeared more comfortable and willing to share their thoughts and experiences with us; the rapport and connection that Payoshni had forged with the participants was evident. During this data collection phase, we interviewed 12 out of our original 14 participants. Of the two that were not available, one had transferred to another school and the other student had married and no longer attended school. During this field visit, the participants were specifically asked to reflect on the changes they noted in themselves as a result of their participation in the program. Any identified changes – positive or negative – should be understood as correlated to the Goal experience and not necessarily caused by it.

Urban Delhi: Imagining a Future

During our third site visit (August 2014), we began with a group interview, eager to check in with the participants about what they had learned and what they were thinking about when it came to their futures. This logically followed interviews during prior visits wherein the AGYW shared their future aspirations with us by drawing pictures of and discussing their career goals and future aspirations. With this line of questioning, we were interested in what goals and visions the AGYW had for themselves and how they understood the education and steps needed to meet these goals. By our third field visit, we were interested in talking through how their lives might be different from the women who had come before them. We wanted to better understand how family support came to matter in their lives (Chawansky & Mitra, 2015b).

As noted above, since our second field visit (April 2014), one of the AGYW participants had been married, which brought a range of feelings for us and for the other AGYW in the program. Though we were interested in continuing to learn about her life and her experiences, we could not easily reach her without her

school affiliation. But, some of the other participants kept in contact with her, and we were able to engage with them about larger issues related to marriage and their futures. Notably, we explored how living in Delhi might have allowed for new considerations about their future lives. In the excerpt featured below, Payoshni led our group interview with the AGYW by asking a number of engaging questions. Multiple participants share their opinions on marriage and their opportunities as urban AGYW.

Payoshni (P): A lot of you have had your parents come to Delhi and therefore things are changing for you. What would it be like if you were growing up in the villages? How would your lives be different? Would life be any different for you?

Padma: There is a lot of difference. Our parents see girls in our neighbors' families who are working or going to school. That impacts them so they think they should send their daughters to school. In villages, the moment a girl is in class 8, they think that she has studied enough. In any case, they always want the girl to know less than the boy. Discrimination is always there. The girl can only study until grade 8 so that she doesn't know as much as the boy does.

P: Why can't the girl and boy be equally educated?

Padma: They do this because when the couple goes out, they want them to think that the boy is more educated. But now that we are in the city, my father saw the didi [older female neighbor] working and had a job, and so he thought that even I could be like that.

P: Who else agrees with Padma?

Meena: I agree. When you see the changes in society, you also change. That is why her father's mindset has also changed. So her father saw the girl next door, saw that she could work, and then he changed his mind. [*pauses*] Didi [*uses this term to respectfully address P*], but what Padma just said, it has happened to our friend, Aparna [the peer who had been married]. Aparna's husband passed class 10, and she only just passed class 8.

Maya: I have spoken to her and her mother. I asked her [Aparna] why she wasn't studying. She said my husband's family doesn't want this, and if they don't want it, how can I keep studying? Now she is at home.

P:	She is not studying anymore?
Several of the group responds:	No.
P:	What did she want?
Maya:	She said, "If they would allow me to study more, I would. If they won't, then I wouldn't."
P:	What do you think? She should have studied more?
Group:	*Overwhelmingly*, *the girls say*, *yes*.
Maya:	And her husband should also say, "You should study more, and do well in life."

This exchange reveals some noteworthy perspectives on the topic of marriage – and arranged marriage in particular – which we then revisited in subsequent interviews. Most saw marriage as a part of their future life trajectories, although some had given more thought about what exactly this might look like and what kind of partner they deemed suitable. Most believed that arranged marriages made sense, especially if (as is often the case) there was some input from the girls on the ultimate choice of partner. Going against one's family and choosing a "love" marriage could bring unnecessary challenges and strife to the family. As one participant would later share, if your love marriage failed, you would lose both your partner and your family (who likely would not have approved in the first place), so the calculation proved risky. In this instance, the AGYW adopted a stance that most would carry throughout subsequent interviews; they understood why Aparna was married, and they did not fault or criticize her. The larger concern with their peer's marriage was the decision to stop her education. Access to an education was highly valued by the girls, and increasingly by their families, including brothers who became allies and advocates as the next exchange demonstrates.

Payoshni (P):	Where do you want to see your family in the future?
Sunita:	Now my father's mindset in relation to women and girls is not very good. I'll hope that his thinking changes … in a good way. My father was saying that they will marry me off in a few months. It is only because of my brother that this plan has been thwarted. I hope my father's thinking about girls will change. My mother is supportive of me.
P:	So there are talks about marriage now at home?

Sunita: Yes, so when I went to the village now, my uncles began to say, "This girl has become older [and should be married]." This and that. They were telling my father, so my brother got very angry and brought me back to Delhi.

P: What is your brother studying now?

Sunita: He is doing a teaching course in college.

P: BEd? [Bachelor's in Education]

Sunita: Yes

P: Is he much older to you?

Sunita: Yes, six years older than me….

P: What are your thoughts about marriage?

Sunita: [laughs] Didi, I think I don't need anyone. In every sphere of life, I can lead it on my own. And also, there is so much restriction on women after marriage … as in whatever the boy says, that is what you are forced to do. And also his family. Whatever they say, you have to follow. So after getting married, you can't do things that you want to do … like the way you can do what you want now. For example, if I want to study further after I get married I will have to ask permission from the boy and his family, and maybe they will not allow me to study. This is not right.

In another small group interview during this final field visit, Payoshni was engaging in small talk with the AGYW, and she asked where they had been and what had occurred since we had last visited them. Their responses indicate yet again the subtle ways the urbanization process impacted the lives of AGYW, this time as it related to mobility.

P: Do you go to the village, Sangita?

Sangita: Yes, to my grandmother's.

P: Is life different there?

Sangita: Life would have been different. Most things would be similar, but certain things would be different.

P: Such as?

Sangita: Like, in villages, the moment it is dark, they will ask you to come. They will ask the girls not to go out. This is something I don't like … that you have to come home the moment it is dark. There are many other things that I don't like. The situations there are a bit down [negative].

P: Madhu, do you think the same?

Madhu: Yes, because in villages they hardly allow girls to go out. We just get to go to school and then from school to home.

P: Do you go out in the evening here?

Madhu: Yes, didi.

P: Aren't you scared?

Madhu: No. Earlier we used to be scared, but now we are not.

P: Sangita? Are you afraid?

Sangita: We used to be scared earlier, but now we are not scared at all.

The excerpts above reveal a variety of interesting and complex sentiments about the lives and futures for the AGYW in urban Delhi. There were presumably more opportunities present in an urban context – for education, training, and work prospects – and the attitudes of family members were (in most instances) slowly adjusting to incorporate these realities into the expectations for the AGYW. Alongside this, most of the AGYW felt more comfortable in navigating and moving through these urban spaces for these opportunities. Their conversations with us did not always specify why this was the case, but it may be due to some of the features of the urban context that we noted. Foremost, more people were on the roads in and around the school, and this is likely different from life in many of the villages. The presence of others may have provided a sense of comfort and anonymity that allowed them to move through the streets to their various destinations with less fear. Additionally, infrastructure such as street lighting and the proximity of public transportation (the Delhi metro stopped near the school) helped create safer spaces for the AGYW to move around the schools and their homes.

Role Models: Imagining a Future

As noted above, the Goal curriculum aims to educate in the broad areas of health and hygiene, self-confidence, communication, and financial literacy. Several of the participants reported knowledge acquisition in these thematic areas, and most reported that they enjoyed learning about the sport of netball, although they noted that they would also like to learn other sports as well. When pressed to describe in more detail what they had learned, some shared that they now knew more about gender (expressed primarily in terms of the difference between boys and girls), forms of violence, HIV transmission, and the proper way to dispose of rubbish. Though financial literacy is advertised as a hallmark of the project, the participants did not report receiving any information on this topic. The fact that the participants reported no gains in terms of financial knowledge may be due to the timing of the third field visit as the AGYW had not yet completed their entire Goal program. While most participants noted knowledge gains in particular areas, some felt that the Goal life skills lectures merely repeated information that they already knew, either from school or other sources.

The learning occurred largely through lectures, activities, or written work that the AGYW completed. In addition, the participants also learned about themselves and their futures through the visible role models who led the Goal program. The young women who served as CSCs led the Goal programming and were important visible role models for the participants, both in terms of their physical presence and the informal conversations they were able to have with AGYW participants. As Meier and Saavedra (2009) note, "role models can be thought of as maps that indicate a distinct destination and a clear route to that destination" (p. 1168). For the AGYW in this program, the destination was "empowerment," and CSCs assisted them in understanding what that might look like in their lives. While research in SGD has focused on the significance of sporting and celebrity role models, here we highlight the importance of the more accessible role models. These CSCs (frequently referred to as "didis") often offered unique perspectives to the AGYW when it came to gender norms and expectations. These excerpts capture the significance of this role modeling when it comes to feeling safe outside of the home, on roads, and moving within the urban environment:

Payoshni (P):	Earlier you all were talking about feeling unsafe on the roads, learning self-defense.[3] What do you think about this now?
Pooja:	Now I don't feel scared. If a person doesn't go out, how will they know if it is scary or not? Now I am not scared. But it is still good to learn self-defense. If there is an emergency, you can use self-defense.
P:	And you [to Lakshimi]?
Lakshimi:	I agree with Pooja. Now we don't need all of that because we have gained a lot of strength and courage because of the netball sessions.
P:	Really?
Lakshimi/ Pooja:	Yes.
P:	What kind of strength?
Lakshimi:	We see these didis [CSCs], and we want to be like them. We feel that in the future, we will also teach younger kids netball. There are also other things that they teach us. We feel that there has been some strength inside us now. Some strength has entered our bodies.

In addition to serving as role models, some participants viewed the CSCs as trusted guides on navigating the fear and uncertainty of urban life as AGYW. An unanticipated and persistent theme of this research relates to girls'

[3]Many of the AGYW learned self-defense through a program at the school. It was not part of the Goal curriculum.

experiences of public spaces and how that relates to broader issues of economic empowerment, mobility, and safety for girls and women within Delhi (see Pilot and Prabhu (2014) for more context on GBV in public spaces). The AGYW of this project report that their understandings of safety and violence come from television shows, newspapers, their parents, and witnessing violence in/around school. CSCs offered additional perspectives for the AGYW to consider, as Zari shared below:

Payoshni: So, think about it … Through these netball programs, the way you used to see the world, see things around you, people around you … has that changed?

Zari: Yes. These didis told us that there are some differences between boys and girls. But then, not much difference as well. So, didis said that we can go out. There shouldn't be any problems. We can go out like boys. So now, I go [out] for shopping. Even if it is alone. I am not scared at all. I don't know why. They [CSCs] say that's probably that I have some sort of belief inside me, some sort of courage.

Payoshni: What have the didis said?

Zari: They have talked about the difference between boys and girls. I told them [didis/CSCs] that my parents said that I should be careful, that I need to be safe. They [CSCs] have told me that if you go out, you will know that it is not that unsafe. When you go out, only then will you know how things work outside. Then you will feel good. If you sit at home because of fear, then nothing will happen. So, I have started going out. I don't feel afraid. Nothing happens. I travel very peacefully.

An obvious concern with the exchange between Payoshni and Zari is that these comments place the responsibility on AGYW to know how to defend themselves and to take (individual responsibility) for their safety. This is something that Payoshni raised in subsequent interviews/interactions with the participants; many recognized that boys needed to be raised differently so that girls and women did not have to bear this responsibility. Additionally, though, a significant point here is that the AGYW were beginning to think through and reflect upon issues and cultural messages of mobility and safety, in part through conversations with CSCs. In other instances, the AGYW cited more famous role models as significant in their lives, but ultimately, they still returned to how all of these varied role models presented new opportunities for girls of their generation. Additionally, they witnessed themselves becoming role models for other (female) family members, and the girls were quite pleased with this newfound respect as the next two excerpts reveal.

Payoshni (P): Where do you see your families in a few years time? Maybe in a few years?

Trina: When we become something ourselves, we will want our families to be proud of us. So they can say, because we have educated our daughters, they have become someone. So other parents will see that and will educate their girls/ daughters. They will think that if their daughter could do something, then our daughters could also achieve something. So all the people who are in this world, they should be told that they should educate their daughters properly so that all girls can complete their education.

P: [To Sangita] Where would you like to see your family? You have your aunt, right? You are very close to her.

Sangita: I want to see that my family is good. That it has a good name. So that people can say, "For this girl … for this family has progressed." I want that my family will become very known.

Sunitra: I want to say something. Trina and Sangita are saying that if we do something, others will follow suit. We have women like [Indira] Gandhi, but then young girls in villages, they have never gotten inspired by these women.

Sangita: There is no influence?

Trina: It has an influence on me. Wherever they could reach and wherever their names could reach, there has been a positive influence. For instance, this tennis player [Sania Mirza] and we have a boxer, Mary Kom…there is an effect on girls' lives because of these women. So, if there are more girls doing well, then more people will know. And in villages, more people will send their daughters to school. From that, people should know how to perceive things.

Sangita: Didi, change has come.

Excerpt 2:

P: In the last four months, when we didn't meet, have there been any changes in your family?

Priya: Yes, there have been some changes. In fact, not in my own family. One of my distant uncles, he has changed by seeing my father.

P: How?

Priya: He has noticed that my father is allowing me to study further so he thought that he should also educate his daughter. Earlier he used to think that he will send his daughter to school until class 8. But now he has changed. He thinks that it is important for a girl to study further.

P: Really? Is that because he saw you doing well?

Priya: Yes.

P: So, did you like this?

Priya: Yes. I liked this very much. That someone is getting an opportunity to study more in life by seeing me. Perhaps the girl would not have gotten this chance otherwise.

In these exchanges, we witness an interesting turn of events from the AGYW highlighting and naming key role models in their lives to seeing themselves as role models for future girls that they have not yet met. In some ways, these excerpts allow us to see how AGYW envision themselves as agents of social change. But, there is also reason to reflect more thoroughly on this positive interpretation. The AGYW seem to feel a pressure to be a certain kind of role model/woman, one that will fulfill the expectations of "good" girls and make their families proud. They will become "something" and one might expect that to be economically secure and able to help provide for her family. They have to prove that they are worthy of being an inspiration and a role model, and this may still be tied closely to others' (family and community members) ideas of who they should be instead of their own ideas. This is an issue tangentially discussed in Meier and Saavedra (2009) when they explore how individual and communal visions for one's life play out in different contexts. That is, the notion of "each individual going alone" does not resonate across all cultures and contexts and therefore having a vision of one's future life that aligns with one's family and community may be a viable path forward for AGYW in this instance (Meier & Saavedra, 2009, p. 1170).

Enacting Empowerment: Negotiating with Parents and Family Members

During our final field visit, we concluded each small group interview by asking participants what they would change about the Goal-Delhi program. We wanted to offer them a chance to think critically about what they were being taught and to identify what unexpected gaps existed when it came to their abilities to apply the empowerment messages coming to them from both the CSCs and the sessions. In most instances, the AGYW had few suggestions. Some wanted a bit more variety (in terms of sport offerings) and one other wanted more opportunities to lead (as a peer leader) within the program. Unexpectedly, a few mentioned that they needed support and practical guidance on how to enact the empowerment lessons being taught to them. The AGYW had different ways of dealing with and challenging their family's concerns, fears, and limiting ideas. Many struggled with

how to deal with these tensions and the rules of their families. Below, Payoshni engages with one AGYW that aspires to "move forward" in her life, but does not have the support of her family members. She helps to explain how she works through these differences in opinion.

Aparna: If we listen to them [family] all the time, then when will I listen to myself? Ma'am, if I listen to all the things they tell me … my father, my mother and my brother … then how will I move forward?

Payoshni (P): Can you clarify?

Aparna: Ma'am, for example, they (family) ask me not to play netball. If I listen to them, then my friends and other kids will go ahead in their lives. But I will stay here.

P: So?

Aparna: This is why I listen to some of the things they tell me, but then [I] also don't listen to some of the things. For example, they keep telling me, "Don't go anywhere." But I tell them, "I will go."

P: So, you think there are some restrictions that are fine, but that there are some restrictions in life that they should not impose on you?

Aparna: Yes ma'am.

The issue comes up again, with another AGYW. Similarly, she wishes that there were some more specific discussions or strategies for how to deal with the real-life tensions she is encountering while trying to apply the empowerment lessons she is learning.

P: Are there any issues that they could have discussed [in the program] that they didn't? For example, they have talked HIV, your bodies, violence, sexual violence. Is there anything else you wanted them to talk about?

Trina: For example, psychological pressure. Those people who put a lot of pressure on girls, and tell them not to do this, do this, don't go there. They can teach all of that.

P: Teach what? How one can convince the parents?

Trina: Like parents put a lot of pressure. Grandparents put a lot of pressure. They belong to a different generation. They are not educated. They don't understand that in present times, things have changed. They don't know about all of that. How they used to think – years ago – they still think like that. But this cannot go on. Mindsets should change.

P: You think the didis can teach girls how to deal with this at home? That's what you need guidance on?

Trina: Yes

This is something that the participants noted with frequency; the AGYW had varying degrees of success in advocating for themselves within their families. As they pointed out, perhaps some form of engagement from the programs to the parents/families might have lessened the (perceived) distance to what the AGYW saw and wanted in their lives and the expectations of family. While some seemed able to adjust their expectations and desires (for more freedom and mobility), others pushed back consistently against the expectations they felt were unfair. Although this need for independence and "freedom" may be a common feature of adolescence, there is some uniqueness in the sense of the messaging that the girls are receiving from the Goal program as well as the shifting family structures and dynamics due to urbanization.

Conclusions

> What I know about my life is that I want to be self-reliant. I don't want to be dependent on anyone else. I used to think about this before as well, and even now, I think the same. I want to become an *independent girl* (says "independent girl" in English).
>
> –Sangita

As Sangita told us about her life, she spoke mainly in Hindi and to Payoshni. But, in the excerpt above, she sheepishly uttered the idea of becoming an "independent girl" in English, with a mix of pride and hesitancy. We presume the mixed emotions emerged from a concern about speaking English proficiently and also about what this utterance might actually mean in her life. What can, does, and should an independent girl do with her life? Who can she depend on? What changes will be needed by her family and community to help her realize this independence? How does urban Delhi support her aspirations? Our research suggests that this is an ever-evolving set of questions, one that was being actively negotiated by the AGYW, the families, and their communities during the time of this research in Delhi.

This chapter sought to help contextualize the transformations in the lives of AGYW by noting how and where urbanization shaped opportunities and expectations. We also highlighted moments wherein the AGYW recognized values attached to outdated notions of education, marriage, and mobilities. Peake (2016)

reminds us that this is the direction that feminist research on women (and by extension, girls) and the urban should take:

> The meanings attached to the term [woman] are mobile and move across historical and geographical terrains … these mobile meanings are often tethered to commonsensical notions of truth that can be taken for granted, obscuring the historical and geographical conditions that made and remake them.
>
> (p. 220)

This research captures these meanings of girlhood moving across different spaces and generations, shifting from rural to urban and manifesting in the lives of AGYW. The "truths" that underpin what girlhood looks like in India (in 2013–14) are also subject to the disruption and unmaking that is taking place through the lived experiences of the AGYW in this program.

The "truths" about girlhood that are actively being upended are being replaced by a new set of truths, those associated with the Girl Effect and other campaigns interested in girls' (economic) empowerment. The main concern with this is that these new truths access tenets of commercialized feminism throughout the life skills and training sessions. As such, an individual AGYW will learn the accepted discourse of female empowerment, but she will likely be left without adequate support to realize her aspirations. This concern is exemplified by the quotation that begins this section and the question that still remains for us at this point in time.

This chapter took a closer look at the Goal-Delhi project and attempted to consider the multiple layers of change that must occur for economic empowerment to be realized. The analysis examines, per Pereznieto and Taylor (2014), how "women and girls experience transformation in power and agency, as well as economic advancement" (p. 234). Economic empowerment programming that involves AGYW begins by challenging stereotypes and expanding ideas about what is possible for their lives. Ideally, it then helps to set up specific opportunities for education and skills training that allow AGYW to move into employment. While this research showed clear evidence of the first part, the second element was not visible to us during this research. Since we followed the AGYW for only one year, it is unclear how and where this research shaped their future lives. That said, the program did advertise some limited opportunities for job shadowing and internships, so there is some sense that girls who stayed involved would receive support for the next steps of their "professional" development. However, this part of the programming was neither readily visible nor offered to the AGYW we interviewed, so it is unclear how available these opportunities are.

Future research on this program or others that seek to economically empower AGYW are well positioned to engage with the key threads of this concept in SGD and SDP. Since a clear case is being made both within and outside of SDP for the economic empowerment of girls, it is important to examine and reflect upon the gendered underpinnings of discourses surrounding economic empowerment.

Researchers must carefully examine why these calls are so prevalent, what might be the costs for AGYW, and what understandings of employability and empowerment predominate. From these beginning questions, researchers will then be able to delve into the specific dimension about how a select program or participants actualize economic empowerment for AGYW within local contexts.

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Chapter 4

Action Sports for Gender Development

In this chapter, we discuss the rise in Action Sports for Development and Peace (ASDP) programs targeted at girls and women within the context of the "Girl Effect." We begin by describing the rise in ASDP programs, considering the potential of noncompetitive, informal sports (e.g., skateboarding, surfing, climbing) for gender and development. Following this, we critically discuss some of the dominant discourses in the justifications and narratives of many such initiatives, before raising some concerns about the rise of "missionary feminism" among action sport enthusiasts from the Global North. In the main part of this chapter, we then offer a case to highlight the efforts employed by an action sports nongovernmental organization (NGO) to provide girls and young women in Afghanistan with opportunities to participate in sport and education. Herein, we also consider the struggles and strategies being employed by local and international staff of the facilities in their everyday efforts to support young Afghan girls and women into and through their programs. In so doing, this chapter offers a nuanced, contextual understanding of the potential and challenges of ASDP programs targeting girls and young women in the Global South. In prioritizing the lived experiences of those passionate and devoted local and international staff involved in the "doing" of ASDP gender work, we come to better understand how deeply they value the opportunities in action sports and associated programs for improving the lives of girls and young women and the risks, reflections, compromises and contradictions they are willing to navigate in continuing this work.

Introducing Action Sports for Development and Peace

Since the mid- and late-1990s, action sports participants from the Global North have established hundreds of nonprofit organizations and movements relating to an array of social issues, including health (e.g., Surf Aid International – a nonprofit humanitarian organization dedicated to improving the "health, well-being and self-reliance of people living in isolated regions," particularly in

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popular surfing locations in Indonesia; see Thorpe & Rinehart, 2013), education (e.g., Skateistan – coeducational skateboarding schooling in Afghanistan, Cambodia and South Africa; see Friedel, 2015; Thorpe & Chawansky, 2016), environment (e.g., Surfers Environmental Alliance [SEA]; Surfers Against Sewage [SAS] – an environmental campaign group with a mission to rid the UK coastline of sewage; see Laviolette, 2006; Wheaton, 2007; Protect Our Winters [POW] – an environmental campaign group bringing together outdoor enthusiasts (particularly skiers, snowboarders, climbers) to advocate for education, awareness and policy change; see Thorpe, 2014), girls' and women's empowerment (e.g., Hera [Germany] and Skate Like a Girl [United States] are both focused on empowering young women and/or trans people through safe, supportive and inclusive opportunities to learn to skateboard); and antiviolence (e.g., Surfers for Peace – an informal organization aimed at bridging cultural and political barriers between surfers in the Middle East).

There is considerable variation within such action sport-related nonprofit organizations and social campaigns. Some ASDPs can be broadly categorized within the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) sector since they use participation in action sports such as skateboarding or surfing as an "interventionist tool to promote peace, reconciliation, and development in different locations across the world" (Giulianotti, 2011a, p. 50). For many others, while the physical act of surfing or skateboarding plays an important role in uniting members of these groups and inspiring potential donors, the action sport is not directly being used as an interventionist tool. Rather, action sport participants from the Global North establish these organizations utilizing preexisting structures and connections within and across local, national and global sporting cultures and industries to raise awareness and fundraise for issues they deem to be socially significant (i.e., Surf Aid International). While some of these organizations remain at the grass-roots level and are relatively unknown beyond the local community or outside the action sport culture, others are gaining recognition from mainstream SDP, development and humanitarian organizations for their innovative efforts and creative strategies to create change in local and global contexts. Increasingly, ASDP organizations are sharing their resources and working together to improve their reach, develop more sustainable programs, and to develop best practices. Such networking and knowledge sharing is particularly evident in skateboarding (i.e., the Skateistan-driven GoodPush initiative) and surfing (i.e., Waves for Change and the Wave Alliance, focused on sharing resources and the development of surf therapy programs in local coastal communities).

Elsewhere, Holly has also explored ASDP initiatives that come from within communities themselves in conflict and postdisaster geographies, including young men using parkour in Gaza (Thorpe & Ahmad, 2015) and young Gazan men's digital entrepreneurialism and parkour skills to facilitate their own social mobilities (Thorpe & Wheaton, 2021), and local, community-led skateboarding initiatives in New Orleans and Christchurch following hurricanes and earthquakes, respectively (see Thorpe, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2020). Through such empirical work, she has argued for scholarship, policy and practice to move "beyond the 'deficit model' by providing space for local voices and prioritizing the creative grassroots strategies devised by youth to support their own recovery" (Thorpe, 2020a, p. 1). Drawing upon three case studies and a multimethod

approach (interviews with digital ethnography), Thorpe (2020) reveals informal sports (i.e., skateboarding, parkour) as critical resources taken up by youth within situations and systems where their specific needs are too often marginalized. By focusing on community-led initiatives in contexts of conflict and disaster, she reveals the social and cultural benefits of grassroots informal action sporting activities, particularly in providing youth with opportunities for valued forms of physical self-expression and escapism, social connectedness, and possibilities to redefine physical and emotional geographies (Thorpe, 2020). Arguably such insights also encourage a broader rethinking of the boundaries of what "counts" as Sport for Development work, with Thorpe (2016a) issuing a call for researchers to pay more attention to community and youth-led, grassroots initiatives rather than organizations and programs that very often are funded and led by (white, male) adults outside local (even national) communities.

While ASDP organizations are a relatively new topic of scholarly investigation, some researchers have drawn on psychological theories and concepts to explain humanitarian and empathetic responses among action sport participants (see Brymer & Oades, 2009; Wymer, Self, & Findlay, 2008). Yet such approaches have tended to oversimplify, decontextualize and romanticize the relationship between action sport participation and activism. Arguably, recent work by sociologists and cultural geographers offers insight into the nuances, tensions and contradictions operating within and across these organizations and the broader social context in which they emerge (see, e.g., Friedel, 2015; Laviolette, 2006; O'Connor, 2015; Thorpe & Rinehart, 2013; Wheaton, 2007). Adopting a critical development perspective that views development as a social construction shaped by the hegemonic workings of power, it is important to note that many ASDPs are underpinned by the same assumptions as other sport for development programs. To date, the founders of most ASDP organizations have typically been action sport enthusiasts (rather than experienced humanitarian/aid workers) from the Global North who have become inspired to create change when they observe poverty and inequalities during their sport-related travel, often in the Global South (see Thorpe & Rinehart, 2013). In their well-intended efforts to share "their" joy for a Western-defined sporting activity (i.e., skateboarding, surfing) with communities in the Global South, many such action sport participants are engaging in practices with neocolonialist underpinnings.

Thus, many action sports-related programs share critiques facing other SDP organizations. Indeed, much like the "sport evangelists" discussed by Coakley (2011), some ASDP leaders, staff and volunteers too often uncritically assume that action sport participation will automatically have a positive impact on "personal character development, reforming 'at risk' populations, and fostering social capital leading to future occupational success and civic engagement" (Coakley, 2011, p. 308; also see; Coalter, 2007). Like many SDP programs, some ASDP adopt the "dominant vision" described by Hartmann and Kwauk (2011), that is, they target marginalized young people with the aim of "equipping them with the tools of self-improvement and management" (p. 288), but in so doing are "recalibrating identities", bringing them in line with the values of the organizers and various other stakeholders (p. 292). Yet other ASDPs are working to adopt

what Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) term an alternative, "interventionist approach" with the aim of contributing to "more fundamental change and transformation" beyond the individual (p. 284).

ASDP: Points of Distinction

Elsewhere Thorpe (2015, 2016) has argued that action sports offer the potential for developing different skills and learning opportunities than the competitive, team-based sports often used in SDP programs (also see Thorpe, Ahmad, & Williams, 2018). In contrast to organized sports such as soccer and basketball, most action sports are not based on head-to-head competition (although competitions are popular among elite performers), thus offering opportunities for youth to gain a sense of achievement without having to compete against, and beat, another opponent. When ASDP programs are well-facilitated, participants can learn alongside one another and gain a sense of accomplishment based on their own skill development, rather than on beating the "opposition." For example, a novice skateboarder can get much satisfaction and joy from simply standing on the board and rolling a few feet along a flat surface; an intermediate skateboarder in the same space might be filled with pride when they successfully "ollie" (jump) the board a few inches off the ground; whereas an advanced skateboarder might get a sense of achievement from a 360-degree "ollie." When appropriately supported, action sports offer ample opportunities for individual empowerment through skills mastery (e.g., coordination, balance), as well as valuable social skills (e.g., communication, sharing of social space, understanding difference).

Another key difference is that many traditional sports require referees to control the play and discipline the players. Most action sports, however, are self-regulating, and thus participants often quickly develop an implicit understanding of the cultural etiquette for sharing the space. There is also a celebration of play, self-expression, and creativity in the use of space and movement in many action sport cultures, which may offer unique opportunities for skill development, communication, and respect between participants in developing nations or war-torn communities. According to one of the cofounders of a skateboarding NGO in Afghanistan, skateboarding is "a fantastic tool for communication": "We get kids from all different ethnicities building relationships with each other. So we've got Hazara kids with Tajik kids' skateboarding together" (cited in Kock & Sehr, 2011). Arguably, many current SDP youth programs could be redesigned to provide more opportunities for shared experiences based on noncompetitive achievement that respect individual differences, celebrate creative self-expression, and embrace peer-mentoring rather than hierarchical coach–athlete relationships in competitive environments that clearly distinguish the winners and losers and those with power/knowledge and those without.

Important for our discussion here – and in stark contrast to many traditional organized sports that were designed by men for men – most action sports developed in a different gender context. As such, women have been active

participants from very early in the development of many action sports, thus offering opportunities for alternative gender relations (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). While most traditional sports divide men and women into two separate and distinct groups, in many action sports, girls, boys, men and women often share the same space (e.g., the waves, a skateboard park, an indoor climbing facility), participating alongside friends and/or family members from both sexes and of varying ages and ability levels. As a plethora of feminist research on action sport cultures has shown, although these sports remain dominated by young men, girls and women (and non-binary) are actively navigating space for themselves, building communities of collective support, and working to expand stereotypes of who participates in these sports and why (see Thorpe, 2017, for an overview of this literature). Opportunities for shared participation has the potential for shifting gender relations, in some (not all) cases building respect for those from different social, cultural and gender backgrounds, as well as skill levels and age. Furthermore, many action sports (e.g., skateboarding, parkour) do not so explicitly privilege the male body (e.g., speed, upper body strength, physical force) as sports such as rugby, ice hockey or American Football. Rather, the gender-neutral traits of balance, coordination, personal style and the creative use of space are highly valued within action sport cultures, such that boys and girls (and non-binary youth) do not need to be separated in the learning experience (although, in some cultural contexts it may be appropriate) and can learn from one another, and come to respect one another through the joy of participating together.

Arguably, well-designed and critically considered informal, action sports programs can offer a valuable contribution to the SDP movement by offering empowering learning experiences, encouraging self-expression, creative thinking and developing a different set of physical and social skills among youth from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Of course, such development outcomes are not automatically based on the type of sport being utilized, and thus we cannot assume simple distinctions between ASDP and SDP organizations. But, with action sports developing in a different historical context to most organized sports and underpinned by a different set of cultural values, these activities may offer something unique to the SDP community. For example, Wheaton's (2013) analysis of skateboarding among street children in (postapartheid) South Africa, suggests that the "newness" of skateboarding was an important factor in its appropriation by young, Black South Africans because "it represented a rejection of the traditional colonial sports of rugby and cricket" (p. 108). The founder of a skateboarding ASDP organization makes a similar observation in regards to the potential for girls skateboarding participation in Afghanistan, explaining: "lots of sports here are seen as for boys [but] skateboarding was too new to be related to gender" (personal communication 2011).

While action sports may not be entrenched with the same histories of exclusion, marginalization and inequality as many traditional sports, it would be a mistake to romanticize action sports as offering a panacea for the field of SDP. As various sociologists of sport have shown, upper-middle class young, white, males have long dominated action sport cultures. Indeed, not dissimilar from many traditional sports, action sport cultures are often hierarchically organized, with

forms of sexism, homophobia and racism present, particularly among fratriarchal groups (see Thorpe & Olive, 2016). The key point here is that it is not necessarily the type of sport that distinguishes programs for youth development, but rather the educational, pedagogical and/or feminist vision underpinning such programs (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). Thus, it is only when critically developed, contextually informed and appropriately supported that ASDPs can provide empowering learning experiences that encourage self-expression and creative thinking. These ASDPs can, in turn, help youth of diverse genders and from varying ability levels and socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds develop a different set of physical and social skills and competencies.

The Girl Effect in ASDP

Over the past decade, there has been a significant rise in the number of informal and formal ASDP programs focused on girls' and women's empowerment in contexts of poverty, conflict and systemic disadvantage. For example, Waves of Freedom proclaims to use "surfing as 'a tool for gender engagement and gender equity across cultures and to create self-empowered individuals who are active agents of change in their communities and beyond'" (cited in Thorpe & Chawansky, 2016, p. 136). Easkey Britton, an Irish professional big-wave surfer, founded this female-focused ASDP after she became the first woman to surf in Iran. In her own words, "I see surfing as a great leveller, a sport that Iranian women could claim as their own and use to empower themselves" (Britton, 2014, p. 1). Another example is the Bangladesh Surfer Girls Project which provides scholarships to orphaned and disabled girls selected from women-headed households in Bangladesh and offers "child friendly quality education and sports and cultural training opportunities" to help "prepare the girls for a better life as independent women" (cited in Thorpe & Chawansky, 2016, p. 140). In 2013, the organization offered 54 scholarships, with three surfing trips included in their curriculum. However, to critically understand the growth of, and operations within, such initiatives, it is important to locate them within the broader context of the "Girl Effect" in development.

As we discuss in the introductory chapters of this book, there has been a "turn to girls" and a "girl powering" of development since the mid-2000s (Koffman & Gill, 2013). Originally coined by Nike Foundation in 2008, the "Girl Effect" quickly became a key development discourse taken up by a wide range of governmental organizations, charities, and NGOs. Many of the critiques of the Girl Effect in development and SDP (see Chapter One) apply to ASDP initiatives aimed at "empowering" girls and women in the Global South through surfing, skateboarding, climbing and other action sports. As we have argued elsewhere, many such programs give little consideration of the broader forms of religious, cultural, national, and international power relations operating on and through girls' and women's bodies, or local girls' and women's own culturally specific forms of agency (Thorpe & Chawansky, 2016). Despite the best of intentions, as Sensoy and Marshall (2010) remind us, the processes and results of such activism

"can be tangled, complex, and reinforce the very power relations that these groups had meant to challenge" (p. 308).

The politics of girl-focused ASDP programs and media coverage of their activities (see Chapter 7) demand a "close examination of who represents whom, for what purposes and with what results" (Sensoy & Marshall, 2010, p. 309). Importantly, however, some women involved in such projects are highly reflexive of their involvement and critical of how their initiatives may be interpreted, consumed, even coopted, by those in the Global North. For example, Farhana Huq, cofounder of the Bangladesh Surfer Girls Project and Brown Girl Surf organization, demonstrates an acute awareness of the problematic tendency for those from Global North to uncritically frame "brown girls" as the "exotic other [s]" (Said, 1978) on boards, as Huq notes:

> There's always a lot of hype when people discover girls are surfing in such a poor region. All of a sudden, the Western world wants to come in and help everyone. While well intended, sometimes surfing is confused with being an answer to helping people overcome systemic poverty. … So it's great there are pictures of under-resourced girls popping up on surfboards, but we have to ask, then what?
>
> (cited in Carmel, 2014)

Here Huq demonstrates a critical understanding of the power relations and ethics involved in ASDP programs focused on girls and women from the Global South and the challenges of creating long-lasting social change in local contexts.

Yet such a level of awareness is not apparent across all female-focused ASDP initiatives, many of whom continue to assume positions as "the saviors of their 'Third World' sisters" (Sensoy & Marshall, 2010, p. 296). As Sensoy and Marshall (2010) suggest, if we view such initiatives as "political text mired in its social context and tied to historically bound colonial discourses and material power relations, then we can ask a different set of questions around 'whom do activists represent and how far the right to represent extends (Ignatieff, 2001, p. 10)'" (p. 309). Building upon the work of critical development and SDP scholars (i.e., Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011) and particularly those engaging with feminist postcolonial theory (i.e., Hayhurst, 2016), there is important work to be done that revisits the implicit assumption that those from the Global North providing access and opportunities for girls and women from the Global South to participate in action sports can lead to improved gender relations, female empowerment, and to healthier and happier lives. In the remainder of this chapter, we offer the case of an action sports NGO and particularly the work of local and international staff of its Afghan branches, to reveal the complex processes and reflections of those providing sporting and educational opportunities for girls and young women in the Global South. First, however, we place this case study in the context of Afghanistan.

Action Sports and the Girl Effect in the Context of Afghanistan

Following decades of internationalized civil strife, earthquakes and drought, Afghanistan remains the poorest country in Asia (Carmichael, 2016). Within Western discourse (i.e., media, policy), Afghanistan is commonly understood as a highly patriarchal society with a "history over the centuries of women's subjugation" (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003, p. 1), including their unequal treatment in the legal and education systems, governance and security structures and within sociocultural norms (Fluri, 2011; Moghadam, 2002; Partis-Jennings, 2019). But gender relations and women's rights in Afghanistan cannot be separated from broader international politics and armed interventions and associated struggles of representation (Kandiyoti, 2007b; Wibben, 2016). In October 2001 (following the September 11 attacks in the United States), Afghanistan became the site of global "war on terror" military intervention. At this time, the situation of women's status under Taliban rule was strategically used to symbolize to "western military powers a justification of war in the name of freedom of women" (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003, p. 1). In its focus on the Taliban as the source of Afghanistan's problems, the "war on terror" narrative contained a remarkable silence "about the crucial role the United States has played in creating the miserable conditions under which Afghan women were living" (Hirshkind & Mahmood, 2002, pp. 340–341).

Others argue against portrayals of Afghan women as victims (to the Taliban or global forces), instead recognizing Afghan women's agency and creative strategies to navigate lives within challenging conditions. For example, Rostami-Povey (2004) explains how Afghan women "organized around gender-related survival strategies… [and] worked together in groups and organisations, generating networks, norms, and trust in their communities" (p. 172) (also see Abu-Lughod, 2002). More recently, there has also been a rise of young Afghan women using social media to amplify their voices and for political purposes (Herman, 2015). But, as feminist scholars makes clear, the gender relations in Afghanistan must be located "in the nexus of global and local influences that shape the policy agenda" (Kandiyoti, 2007b, p. 169; Manchanda, 2014). According to Kandiyoti (2007b), "at the grassroots, the dynamics of gender disadvantage, the erosion of local livelihoods, the criminalization of the economy and insecurity at the hands of armed groups" are all factors that "combine seamlessly to produce extreme forms of female vulnerability" (p. 169). Just as we must be wary of Western constructions of gendered power relations that ignore the complex international and national forces that press upon Afghan women's everyday lives, we must also take care not to overlook Afghan women's agency within this context. With the politics of gender in Afghanistan playing out "against the background of a complex layering of influences," it is important to recognize gender relations as "a fluid and uncertain landscape, featuring old dilemmas and new challenges" (Kandiyoti, 2007b, p. 193).

Alongside the "war on terror" military intervention, Afghanistan became the site of a "liberal peace-building project" that incorporated a vast array

of international organizations (IOs) and NGOs, institutions, and donors (Partis-Jennings, 2019, p. 179). By 2006, there were "more than 800 international and indigenous Afghan NGOs operating humanitarian, reconstruction, development, and peace-building programs" (Olson, 2006, p. 1).

At the time of writing this book, the political situation was again changing rapidly in Afghanistan, particularly with countries such as the USA and Canada withdrawing troops. Many inside and outside of Afghanistan anticipated that the withdrawal of international military presence in Afghanistan would significantly impact the safety of Afghan girls and women, and the sustainability of organizations focused on girls and women's education, health and sport (Alizada & Ferris-Rotman, 2021; Gibbons-Neff, Faizi, & Rahim, 2021; van Bijlert, 2021). Many reports and news articles from the Global North reinforced the notion of the United States as a "savior" for Afghan women and thus made a strong case that US withdrawal would negatively impact the lives of Afghan women. However, a report produced early in the withdrawal process, based on semi-structured interviews with 23 women from Afghanistan's rural districts, revealed a more complex picture, with Afghan women mixed in their initial interpretations of the US–Taliban agreement and their hopes and fears for the future (van Bijlert, 2021). Since this report, the situation for girls and women – particularly those participating in sport and/or working for international NGOs – has become ever more urgent with many living in hiding and desperately seeking safe passage out of a country that they anticipate as being very dangerous for girls and women, with few future opportunities for their future education, sporting participation, or basic human rights. At the time this book had moved into production, many governments and organizations around the world were working to support safe passage for girls and women, athletes, and staff of international organizations (including sport-related SDPs), from an Afghanistan ruled by the Taliban.

Thus, it is important to acknowledge that this chapter (also see Chapters Five and Seven) draws upon a previously collected data set (2014–2019). Without the voices and perspectives of women living in Afghanistan at this time, we are unable to say more about the lived experiences of Afghan girls and women or SGDs working in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of US troops. Any such analyses must prioritize the voices and lived experiences of Afghan women, while also remaining critical of Global North (and particularly North American) media narratives that reproduce particular framings of the Global North as the "savior" of Muslim girls and women, and dominant readings of Afghanistan in the context of complex geopolitical power relations.

The Case of an Action Sports SDP

Sport for Youth* (pseudonym) was part of the expansive landscape of international NGOs working in Afghanistan during the 2000s. It began as a (self-described) "independent, neutral, Afghan NGO" that provides action sports tuition, and art and language education, to urban and internally displaced youth in Afghanistan. Founded in the early 2000s by an action sports participant from

the Global North, Sport for Youth has continued to grow with two Afghan facilities. Sport for Youth also has programes in Asian and African countries. In this chapter, we focus primarily on the two Afghan facilities (Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif) that have been providing for more than 1,000 Afghan children and youth per week for more than a decade – almost 50 percent of whom are girls – and particularly the efforts by staff to support the development of Afghan girls' and young women's educational, social and physical needs.

Through our long-term research with the organization (see Thorpe & Chawansky, 2016, 2017), and Thorpe's ongoing role as an international advisor, we have come to develop a nuanced understanding of the organization's developments over time. Through a series of interviews with the founder, we recognize his approach to development as informed by a critical understanding of international development efforts in Afghanistan. Upon first arriving in Afghanistan, he quickly became concerned that existing NGOs "didn't seem to include Afghans themselves in the decision making processes," which resulted in development that "failed in the longer term when the money or expertise stopped flowing from external sources" (interview, 2014). Such critical observations informed his approach to Sport for Youth, and particularly his efforts to create a "local led campaign" that "*includes* women throughout the development process" (interview, 2014). In this way, the founder was initially motivated by feminist sentiments of empowering local girls and women to become leaders of their own society. Yet he also acknowledged the risks of offering girls sporting and educational opportunities in Afghanistan and detailed their strategies for minimizing risk to participants and staff:

> The key is that change isn't happening too fast…With [Sport for Youth], we want to be a hub for female empowerment, but at the same time we don't want to attract unnecessary attention to ourselves; it must be a home-grown initiative, it has to be a grassroots women's empowerment hub. It can't be something where there are outside values pushed onto young kids… we want them to create something that is also sustainable, something that works over the long run (interview, 2016).

Despite efforts to develop innovative approaches toward understanding and respect for the unique value systems, etiquette and practices within the Afghan context, the origins of Sport for Youth were based in some of the same neocolonial underpinnings of many other SDP programs operating in the contemporary neoliberal context (Thorpe & Rinehart, 2013; also see; Darnell, 2009, 2010; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). However, the organization has continued to reflect on the cultural and gendered assumptions underpinning their early work, with ongoing changes in their efforts to move toward best practice in/for the local communities in which they work. This process has been greatly informed by the voices and expertize of both local staff as well as international staff and volunteers.

For the first 10 years, international staff and volunteers led the Afghan programs, with support from local Afghan staff and students. However, in 2016 the organization transitioned from being run by international staff and volunteers to being entirely managed by Afghan staff, with international staff providing remote support from their European office. This change toward a more locally led model was inspired by a combination of factors. One key consideration was the organization's growing awareness about the neocolonial underpinnings of development work and Global North/South hierarchical structures inherent in Sport for Youth leadership models. Another key factor was increasing concerns about the high risks posed (to all) by international staff presence. This transition took many years to implement, including the development and support of local Afghan staff to take over the day-to-day operations of the two Afghan facilities. Similar processes were implemented in their other international programs (in Asia and Africa) following the success of the organizational transitions in Afghanistan.

Sport for Youth has continued to evolve and change over the past 15 years, and consistent efforts have been made to ensure opportunities for girls and women to participate in the programs and to obtain paid-work and leadership opportunities within the organization. Women play key roles as staff, managers and leaders across the organization (see Thorpe & Chawansky, 2017). In contrast to many development and aid organizations, (until 2021) women made up 50 percent of the management team and 50 percent of the full time staff at headquarters. Across the two facilities in Afghanistan, women constitute just fewer than 50 percent of staff (21 of the 45 positions), with local women holding a number of leadership positions. Sport for Youth has gained international acclaim for its work, including a long list of awards. While the organization works with boys and girls across three countries, much of the acclaim is focused on their work with Afghan girls which have long been the most visible aspects of their programming. In Chapter Seven, we discuss the affective power, as well as the risks and ethics, of such visibilities in more depth.

The remainder of this chapter draws upon 14 semi-structured in-depth interviews with international (7) and local Afghan (7) staff primarily conducted via Skype between early 2015 and mid-2017. With the aim to create space for the personal experiences of staff, interviews were conducted with two male and five women international staff who had worked for the organization for an average of 3.5 years. At the time of interviews, some were still working in Afghanistan, but due to the timespan of this project, other interviews were conducted when staff had left Afghanistan and were either working for the same NGO at the international office or at other facilities, or had moved onto other work. The further the participants were temporally and physically removed from Afghanistan and/or the organization, the more open the participants seemed to be in speaking about their experiences. At the time of interviews with local staff, five were still working for the NGO with two having recently migrated from Afghanistan. Perhaps not surprisingly, some seemed hesitant to be too critical of the organization for which they currently work or to place too much emphasis on the challenges and risks they navigate in their everyday working lives. As well as

limiting information on the organization, pseudonyms are used throughout this chapter in an effort to protect the identities of participants.

Of the international staff participants, all were in their mid to late 20s at the time of interviews and primarily from Australia, Canada, Germany, and the United States. Five were "white" and two were of mixed ethnicities, and all were highly educated (with undergraduate or Masters degrees in development, international relations, and/or education) with extensive experience traveling and working overseas, including conflict and postconflict countries. The local staff (four female and three male) varied more in age, ranging from 18 to late 50s, and came to work for the organization through two main routes: (1) as participants in the programs, into volunteer and then ultimately paid positions and (2) through applications for paid positions (i.e., community educator; finance manager). Many of those in the second category had higher education degrees and/or considerable experience working for other NGOs in Afghanistan. All participants were recruited (for the research) via an email invitation shared via organizational management. The invitation detailed the project and clarified that participation was entirely voluntary, there would be no consequences for (non) participation, and that all efforts would be made to ensure confidentiality throughout the project and anonymity in any published materials.

Informed by literature on SGD and ASDP and the desire to create space for the voices of those working behind the scenes (and particularly women working in action sport-focused SGD), each interview was over an hour in duration and focused on two key themes: (1) the efforts of the organization to use educational and sporting programs to cater to the unique needs of Afghan children and youth, and particularly girls, and (2) the personal experiences and reflections of the staff working in Afghanistan. There was much blurring across the two themes. A key line of questioning within the interviews was to explore how local and international development staff made meaning of the gendered complexities of development work differently based on their cultural, social and organizational positionality. In the remainder of this chapter, we present insights from these interviews, exploring differences between local and foreign staff perceptions and reflections of gender work in Afghanistan.

Afghan Staff: "The Important Thing is to Not Lose the Hope"

Each of the local staff expressed their commitment to the work they do and valued the contributions of the organization in improving the lives of children and youth in Afghanistan. In the words of Kaamisha, a local female staff member:

> The important thing is to not lose the hope. Accept that it may not change for you, but there is a big chance that if you keep working, it might change for your children or the next generation or the generation after. It keeps you going, despite the difficulties.

For all local (and international staff too), it was a deep belief in the benefits of their work for improving the lives of Afghan children that justified "the difficulties" involved in this work:

> We have lots of students from lots of backgrounds, like educated people, uneducated people, students that are going to school, students that are not going to school and from different cultures and religious background, and when they are working together, especially in our skate and create classes, when they are sitting with each other they are learning from each other. It's the good things that we see in our students' faces, this makes you see how important this is.

Despite the rewards, many of the local staff spoke of the challenges, particularly regarding Afghan girls' participation. As one young male staff member explained:

> Right now, to be honest in the current situation of Afghanistan, of course it is challenging for females to participate in all programs in all fields! But it's also a big problem and as important for men to participate because they both experience war and they've both lost whatever they had, so we are just trying to be shoulder to shoulder and work and gain whatever we want for ourselves and for females (Bahnam).

In such comments, we see the Afghan staff acknowledging the challenges in providing sport and education programs for children in a context of long-term war, conflict and extreme poverty. The reference to "shoulder to shoulder" approaches to change reflects the strategy to work together with staff and volunteers within Sport for Youth, along with key community partners and other NGOs focused on improving the health and well-being of children and youth in Afghanistan.

In their efforts to create "safe" spaces for their female participants, Sport for Youth staff provides female-only lessons with female Afghan staff leading the learning. The organization also provides free transport to and from the facilities and has appropriate prayer rooms available to their staff and students. Such initiatives are necessary for Afghan families to consider sending their daughters or sisters to Sport for Youth. As the following comments from local female staff suggest, the challenges for girls' participation varied greatly:

> Some families don't allow their girls to join with the boys' classes. Therefore, we prefer to separate classes. It's a big problem, because for the skateboarding classes, they bump into each other, touching each other, it's not allowed in our culture.

> Families are different. Not all the families have this idea that they keep their daughters at home and don't let them study. Just some of them, not all the families… have this kind of idea to keep your daughters at home to work. In my family, we are eight sisters and one brother, and my mum does all the housework alone. We all study, we all go to courses, we all go to school. Just some families they are coming from where they are living in some villages, not all villages, they have this idea that they don't like to let their daughters to study or to work outside. These families, they don't let their daughters go to the skate park – they just say we are alone and we need the daughter to help.
>
> Some of their fathers have this idea, religious belief, or just don't like their daughters to go to outside work or study or go to courses or continue their education.

In such comments, we see cultural, religious and economic factors intersecting to inform family decisions as to the opportunities for their daughters and/or sisters participation in sport and education programs. As one of our local staff commented, for some families, daughters are required to carry much of the domestic responsibilities, with such duties increasing with age:

> Just at the beginning of the year, one of our students, she was the oldest girl of the house and their mum and her dad didn't let her come to skateboard because no one was there to work with their mum and her mum has had a baby; she couldn't come any more to skate park because she had to take care of the baby, work with her mum. Things like this are very common (female staff).

Recognizing different family priorities and understandings of appropriate activities for girls outside of the home, local Sport for Youth staff work hard to communicate with families, telling and showing them that they are an NGO committed toward improving the lives of youth in Afghanistan, and that it remains deeply dedicated to providing a "safe" space for Afghan girls.

Similar to the work in Chapter Three that shows the importance of the family in girls' participation in SDP programs in Delhi (India), the family also played a critical role in Afghan girls' participation in the Sport for Youth programs. Some of our interviewees were involved in the important community work required to convince families to allow their daughters to attend Sport for Youth. This work included regular phone calls or visits to family homes. For example, Hamdiya, an older Afghan woman involved in speaking with families explained (via a translator):

> There are many families that say sport is not meant for girls. They are saying no, but when I am going there, talking with them, conversing with them, and explaining that [Sport for Youth] is a

> safe place, [assuring them that] no one is coming to watch their daughter or she is being abused. Also I explain that we are picking your daughter or your sister up from your home and going to [Sport for Youth], then after that when she is done with her classes then again we have transportation for them. So we are solving problems like this. When I visit the families I am giving a lot of information about [Sport for Youth], so after that they agree to send their daughters or sisters to [Sport for Youth].

Continuing, she acknowledges some of the challenges of "recruiting" more participants and meeting the expectations of Sport for Youth leadership:

> In some events we are calling families and children to come and join our event. We put on events so the families can come to see the programs and the building, to see that it is safe for their children. It happens a lot when the director says go out and survey [recruit] and bring this many students to [Sport for Youth]. It's harder for me to bring more girls, but I am trying hard because I have to complete the mission. I am working for [Sport for Youth] and I had to do that, so it happens sometimes.

In her efforts to recruit more girls into the programs, she often faced questions from the families about the presence of international staff and their intentions:

> I now hear… when you take my daughter to [Sport for Youth]… to a foreigner, that is a bit risky. They were asking that there is foreigners, so we can't send our children to [Sport for Youth] because we are not trusting you because you will sell my daughter, or if you don't then the foreigners will do it. But I explain that the foreigners come here and they are here to help and they are helping us, they are doing the project not for me, it's for your children, they are helping us. After that, they are sending their children.

Family concerns about the involvement of international staff and the motivations of the international NGO were lessened (but not entirely removed) as Sport for Youth transitioned to being entirely managed by local staff. Such concerns about the involvement with international NGOs are common in Afghanistan, particularly with the possible risks (i.e., Taliban attack, community accusations; see below) associated with interacting with international staff and foreign organizations.

Sport for Youth worked carefully to build trust among the communities within which they work. As two of the local women staff acknowledged:

> One of the good things that [Sport for Youth] is doing right now is that they do everything within the Afghan context. I grew up in

> Afghanistan, always wearing a headscarf, that's part of my culture. But all the international women staff that go there, they all wear head scarves. All the students, everyone, all the staff are required to wear appropriate clothes. Part of the success is doing everything within the Afghan context, and the internationals, they don't maybe use jokes or any American stuff.

> [Sport for Youth] main success to me is doing everything within the Afghan context. Even for the girls, they have separate days for the girls and separate days for the boys. For the girls, they provide the transport which makes it safe, and that's why the family let them. [Sport for Youth] has someone who goes to the families and talks with them, and invites them to visit the facility. The families always have a chance to participate in the celebrations and stuff that they have there. The good thing was that there was that chance for the family to see that their daughters are in a safe place. They are not doing things wrong, they're just playing the sport and getting the education. The one thing, the main thing was that the family felt respected being invited there and the support.

As a result of such efforts, some of the local staff had observed changes over recent years with families becoming more supportive of their daughters leaving the home for education:

> There has been change for the last years, like before many families would not allow their children to come out, especially girls. But right now they are coming, the girls are getting an education, their parents also want that their children should go and get an education, so I think changes have come. The NGOs have been working hard to build awareness of what they are doing and why, so right now the parents are getting a little bit open minded.

Despite signs of "progress," an ongoing challenge for local (and many international) staff was that, having witnessed the "positive" changes in their Afghan girl students (i.e., new skills, knowledge and confidence), they often felt disheartened when their students were married young and thus no longer able to attend the programs.

In Afghanistan, 57% of girls are married before the age of 19, but the most common ages for girls to get married are 15 and 16 years of age (Riphenburg, 2004). The social, cultural, religious and family expectations of married women often prohibited Afghan girls' continued involvement in the Sport for Youth programs:

> Of course it's harder. When a girl is coming here and then their families see a rich man they are just… girls to get married, because the guy's rich. It's very hard and everything is going back to the

> past. Like she's growing up and she's going back to the past. There was a girl studying Back to School. She was only 14, but there was a rich guy so the family just decided the girl will get married to this old guy. So it is happening… all the time (Hamdiya via translator).

As we discuss below, some of the international women staff similarly struggled with the contradiction that, while they were providing short-term opportunities for Afghan girls to gain an education, the organization was not in a position to challenge deeply entrenched socioeconomic conditions and cultural practices that mean (some) families marry their young daughters for money. Such instances were common, thus promoting local and international staff to question the long-term impact of their work.

Navigating Risk

As Thorpe (2020) has explored in-depth elsewhere, many of the local Afghan staff acknowledged risk as part of their everyday and working lives. For example, Ammoz acknowledged that managing risk was an important aspect of his job, as well an everyday part of life in Afghanistan:

> It's a risk in Afghanistan to walk on the road or to drive on the roads. So, every day we are worried and bring students by transportation and to take them back to home. It's challenging because everywhere a bomb blast can happen.

Despite such everyday risks, most local participants expressed high levels of confidence that the organization was working to ensure their own safety and that of fellow workers and program participants. During interviews, most local staff expressed strong beliefs that their organization was safer than other international NGOs in Afghanistan. For example, Amooz proclaimed: "We are safer than other international NGOs because we are working for children. If we worked for a political one, then we will not be safe." Most local staff (and some international staff) also mentioned the importance of an organizational strategy to limit the visibility of the organization in the local context and felt this approach was working well in preventing unwanted attention and/or attacks. As Bahnam explained:

> One of the policies of [Sport for Youth] is that we don't want to be too famous in Afghanistan. We are not giving too much interviews or stories about our organisation in any local media. That's why the terrorists are focused on those other foreign NGOs doing sport and education, because they are famous. And when we are not famous, they will not even touch you.

As suggested in this quote, the program's perceived "invisibility" within Afghanistan gave some staff a sense of safety. Of course, it is also possible that local staff may have overemphasized their feelings of safety, and avoided admitting experiences of fear, with concerns that the data may go back to the organization or that they may be considered weak in the eyes of the interviewer, the organization, or their communities more broadly.

Although local staff were largely unwilling to emphasize the risky nature of their work, most did acknowledge that working for an international NGO with a focus on girls' sport and education does pose some risks, particularly (though not exclusively) for women staff. They noted that such risks were heightened in the highly visible spaces between home and work:

> When the [Sport for Youth] car is going in front of my door, so people of course are thinking "oh, a car came from an NGO and [I am] going to an NGO and I am working there." So most of the people are thinking very bad of us (Farzaneh).

> Inside [the Sport for Youth facilities] it's safer, but outside it's not safe at all, especially for girls and everybody knew that we were the [sporty] girls. We would go outside and there had to be someone, a man from [NGO], a staff or student with us so that we were safe (Kaamisha).

Although few directly mentioned risks posed by the Taliban, some did acknowledge concerns that their work could draw unwanted attention from this group:

> Sometimes people are worried that the Taliban say that we are doing this, or we are doing that. Because it's a sport programme, some girls are coming along. These are the things that they don't like for girls (Asal).

Despite the very real risks posed by the organizational focus on sport and education for girls and young women's empowerment, only a few acknowledged such risks. Instead, most focused on the "invisibility" of their programs, thus helping maintain a *sense* of safety for themselves and their students inside the organizational facilities.

Many of the local staff mentioned that their family had initial reservations about their employment with an international NGO working in girls' sporting opportunities, but responses depended on the social status and education of families, as well as the gender of the staff member. Whereas local staff from poorer families typically embraced the financial opportunities in their employment – with the risks involved in such work considerably less than many other jobs that poor Afghan youth may find themselves in (i.e., selling trinkets on the street, soldiers, prostitution) – most families (of varying socioeconomic backgrounds) were concerned for their daughters' safety. As illustrated in the

following comments, families of Afghan women working for international NGOs were particularly worried about the risks this posed to their daughters:

> Now the security of Afghanistan is not so good. It's worrying for all the families of girls that they are going outside and working, especially with foreigners or international people, it is very worrying (Hesther).

> Families worry about you going to work. Mums really love their children… she would say: "Oh [daughter's name], you're going into this situation; please, please take care of yourself when you go to your job" (Asal).

Some of the women staff mentioned that their families were "highly educated" and supportive in their pursuit of a meaningful career but still had worries for their safety. For many of the Afghan staff interviewed, they had a strong sense of responsibility to their families, and it pained some that their working activities put such stress on their loved ones.

Importantly, local staff understandings of gender and risk must be contextualized within the cultural, physical, and political context of Afghanistan. Most of the staff interviewed grew up in a country that has been through various phases of sustained conflict and war, political instability, with high levels of poverty, unemployment, everyday violence, including varying forms of cultural, economic, symbolic, and physical violence toward women. As one of the female Afghan staff explained:

> There was an explosion at an American University in Kabul today. Many of the students are still stuck inside while there are fires going on. Even highly educated people are literally living in a battlefield. We're not participating, but we're living it. We leave the house, and we don't know if we'll come back. There could be a suicide attack in front of us and we could die. Every one of us, when we go to school or work in the morning, we don't know if we will come back… this is just how it is (Asal).

Despite initial hesitation, some local women staff offered glimpses into the risks they accept in working for an international NGO. For example, one local woman explained the increased levels of risk for any Afghan woman seeking new work, educational or sporting opportunities: "those security concerns are something that every female who is active in Afghanistan faces; some more, some less, it depends on how visible you are and how active you are" (Kaamisha). After some prompting, she confided that her decision to pursue graduate studies overseas was motivated by her desire for further educational and professional opportunities, but "there were also other security concerns that came into it that I had to leave the country." Rather than offering further detail into her own

experiences of risk, she continued by offering the following commentary on the dangers faced by "visible" girls in Afghanistan:

> So they draw a line for girls to be invisible all the time, not be in the picture. If a girl tried to cross that line and do something different, that means, especially for extremists, it means that this girl did it so other girls would do it too. So [the thinking is], let's do something to this girl so it's a lesson for other girls. It's trying to prevent a change to happen, a change that they can't understand. There can be threats to their family, and specifically daughters. It's very specific to that context, which is hard to understand, even for me sometimes… (Kaamisha).

Another local woman recalled receiving death threats during her previous employment with another international NGO:

> I was sitting at home and then one day these three women wearing burkas came to my house, like "are you [name]? You work for [name of organization], you are a spy!" Then me and my family, we all got so scared. I decided to quit the job because I felt like I might die or something (Farzaneh).

When faced with such risks to her own life and the safety of her family, she spent the following years actively seeking out opportunities to migrate.

Importantly, such risks are not only experienced by the female staff of Sport for Youth. Three of the local male staff discussed the implications of their involvement with an international NGO, particularly in regards to difficulties of returning home to their more conservative provinces:

> I can't go to my province anymore because they are thinking "oh, [name] is working with foreigners." It's challenging for me (Bahnam).

> I'm not allowed to go to my home province. If I go there, they will definitely kill me. … they just warned me to not come, because we are working for equal opportunity for male and female (Amooz).

These men also faced accusations from their families that working for an international NGO was compromising their Afghan identities, and this was particularly the case when Sport for Youth was still managed by international staff:

> Personally, for me, I really enjoy them [international staff]. I like learning new skills and learning different cultures. [But] in my family, if I learn something here and I share it at home, they would tell me "you have become a foreigner" (Faireh).

Another local male staff member discussed some of the strategies he and his colleagues adopted to minimize such accusations:

> We have to take control of our attitude, because we have our own tradition, our own culture. It will be a *bad* idea to bring other cultures to our culture. We have to control ourselves, so we're trying a lot to not do any foreign acting in our families. Not showing them too many of our new skills or new knowledge (Bahnam).

As suggested in these comments, both male and female Afghan staff members develop an array of practices – ranging from avoiding "foreign acting" to not returning to their home provinces – in order to manage family and community perceptions, and thus reduce risks (for themselves and their families) associated with their work for an international NGO with a strong emphasis on girls' education and sport.

In contrast to the international staff that had the option to terminate their placement, board a plane and return to their relatively safe and stable home countries in the Global North, local staff have fewer options. Through their involvement with the NGO, a few had opportunities to migrate – to study and/or work in other countries – but such routes of possibility are rare and increasingly difficult. As our previous work has suggested, risk in development work is always relative (Thorpe, 2020). For Afghan staff who have grown up amid high levels of everyday and exceptional risk, perceptions of what is a source of fear, stress or anxiety within their work environment must be understood within this broader context. As Kaamisha notes, the risks experienced by Afghan staff – and particularly girls and women – are "very specific to that context," and thus parallels between international and local staff experiences of risk cannot be drawn. Importantly, however, risk is also relational. For example, after working for a series of international NGOs before coming to Sport for Youth, one Afghan woman reflected: "This whole world situation, when you see it, it totally sucks. How difficult it is for women to do anything here. How you see some people are allowed to travel and some not. I want to be able to travel the whole world…" (Asal). Working together within the same organization, international and local staff observed, discussed and reflected on the distinctive conditions of each other's lives, complicating understandings of their own (always gendered) positions of risk, safety and vulnerability as always contextual and relative. In most instances, at the time of the interviews, both the local and international staff proclaimed that they considered the risks of their work worth taking as they deeply valued the opportunities they were creating for Afghan children and youth, and particularly Afghan girls (also see Thorpe, 2020). Herein we see interesting parallels with research by Darnell (2010, 2011) and Welty Peachey, Musser & Shim (2018) on SDP and volunteerism, and the meaning the volunteers place on their work such that they are willing to endure various risks, discomforts and uncertainties as they navigate "antinomies, liminality, and structural relations" in the field (Giulianotti, Collison, & Darnell, 2021).

However, with the devastating events in Afghanistan in 2021, working for an international NGO, and particularly one focused on girls' sport and education, meant that Sport for Youth Afghan staff members (and their families) and students faced extreme danger. In this context, the SDP closed all sites, limited all past and present visibilities of the organization's work in Afghanistan, and worked tirelessly to facilitate safe passage for their Afghan staff desiring escape. At the time of production, Sport for Youth had supported the safe evacuation of 145 people, all female staff (except three) and their families. The situation in Afghanistan in 2021 is a tragic but important reminder to all those working in SDP. The geopolitical environment can change very quickly, with international NGOs potentially exposing their local staff and students to unanticipated, life-threatening risk. These are the ethical responsibilities and moral challenges that all those working in/for international SDPs must consider with grave care.

International Staff: "There's Lots of Stuff That Comes Up That Is Really Difficult"

In contrast to Darnell's (2010) findings that "[SDP] interns interpreted difference as markers of under-development which secured the focus of the SDP movement on the under-development of others" (p. 396), each of the international Youth for Sport staff interviewed demonstrated complex understandings of the intersecting issues of gender, culture, socioeconomics and religion in Afghanistan. For example, Kristine's "attitude toward gender" is "not to focus so much on the differences", but rather she prefers to "acknowledge there are differences but also acknowledge that boys also have a hard time in different ways and are dealing with gender pressures as well." Although our research was focused on the Youth for Sport projects in Afghanistan, each of the participants had also worked across at least one of the other Sport for Youth sites (Asia and Africa) and discussed their cultural comparisons of gender relations evoked by their work in different contexts:

> When I'm talking to people about [Sport for Youth], there's often this assumption that there's so much less gender inequality in Cambodia than in Afghanistan. It's true that Afghanistan is a really extreme case in gender inequality, but it's also a really big problem in Cambodia. … The experiences of women are definitely different but they are both difficult experiences…Basically, they're both denied opportunities systematically (Hazel).

As illustrated, some international Sport for Youth staff demonstrated critical understandings of the unique, and similar, challenges for girls' sporting participation within and across particular countries. Not only do such understandings challenge Western perceptions of gender in Afghanistan but also prompt a heightened reflexivity of their roles and responsibilities in unique fields of development (see Thorpe & Chawansky, 2017).

Both the international male and female staff acknowledged that they continued to learn much from the local staff and appreciated working in an organization

that tried a range of strategies (i.e., building a prayer room, hiring a community facilitator) to build a safe environment for the local children:

> We put a prayer room in the facility, so the community could see that we were being respectful of the culture, so there was an Islamic prayer room. One of the rooms that was supposed to be a classroom, we actually just decided to turn it into a full time prayer room. Our skate instructors who were Afghan would take the kids in and do prayers before the classes, or sometimes after the classes, and we made a really big effort to show the community that this is what we were doing. Any time that we had people visiting we would show them the prayer room and they were all very impressed, they were like "oh wow, look at [Sport for Youth] and how much they are respecting our culture." So the prayer room was a big hit, actually and it worked out really well.

> The outreach workers were so important, and they worked with quite a big team. They would do home visits, and us foreigners weren't involved at all in that, which was appropriate that we shouldn't have been. We wouldn't have been able to bring anything to it anyway, because we were clueless about that sort of thing. They would find maybe a sympathetic teacher at a school and then she would bring some girls and speak to their families in person. The Afghan outreach workers played a really critical role.

Some of the international staff we spoke with, however, were less self-congratulatory, reflecting critically on some of the challenges and contradictions in their work. For example, one female staff member noted, "it's a constant leveraging of big and little pictures, and trying to keep priorities in check and affirm that we are actually doing something [valuable]. Then also, at the same time, having to think about it in more abstract terms when you have to do something on a smaller scale that goes against your values."

Each of the international women staff admitted some personal struggles with some of the cultural and gender differences in Afghanistan but spoke of their individual and collective efforts to better respect local cultural traditions and stay focused on the policies of the organization. As noted above, a particular issue they found challenging was the early marriages of some of their young female participants and staff. While Afghan girls were generally allowed to participate in the programs offered by Sport for Youth during their early childhood, the organization struggled to keep their female participants once they reach marrying age (typically 15–16 years old but often much younger). This caused some frustration and disappointment for international and local staff alike, but as the following comments from the founder illustrate, the organizational policy was to tread very carefully in such terrain and to respect cultural value systems:

> Most families will support their girls attending up until 11 or 12 years old, and after that it's definitely a bigger challenge the older they are. Many of our best female staff and students have left [Sport for Youth] to get married or have children. But this is not something that we have interfered with, as it is not our job to tell someone else what life decisions they should take…It's very important that we don't impose any values that are not appropriate in Afghanistan. It is extremely hard because not many people agree with that decision [girls marrying at young ages, sometimes to family members], but it's not our role to interfere in what the family decides or what she decides for herself. These are hard things to comprehend and hard things to swallow, but we've got to pick our battles (interview, 2016).

Each of the women interviewed spoke of the importance of ongoing conversations with their (local and international) colleagues to understand and respect the organizational policy, as well as to reflect critically upon their own assumptions about women's rights and to try not to impose these on local children and youth. For example, Clara explained: "There's lots of stuff that comes up that is really difficult. I was constantly trying to keep perspective of 'I have cultural stuff' and 'there is cultural stuff here'… But then there are things [child prostitution and/or violence] that happen and you're like 'No, that crosses a line.'" Melissa also revealed her thinking process on some of the cross-cultural matters the organization confronts: "I've really thought about this a lot… is it right to impose our ideas of right or wrong on the kids? We try hard not to, but some things [kids hitting each other] cross the line of human rights." Similarly, Hazel discussed her personal struggles to accept cultural traditions and practices that challenged her deeply embodied moral value systems:

> To hear men speaking on behalf of girls or women…it's difficult to deal with. We work really hard to fit into the cultural context… but it's difficult sometimes. I would consider myself a feminist, and I'm also a skateboarder and I'm interested in development, so for me to have someone speak that way is really difficult to handle.

In our interviews, a number of the women staff suggested that their personal feminist politics and perspectives had to be qualified in order to work within organizational policy. In such comments, we see the women staff critically engaging with issues of cultural relativism as they intersect with feminist values.

The international staff who worked for Sport for Youth in Afghanistan engaged in a variety of individual and collective strategies to help navigate the complex gender and cultural terrain of their working environments. Some of the women staff and volunteers experienced internal conflict between their own personal politics (e.g., feminist concerns about young girls' rights) and organizational policy (e.g., respect of cultural values and avoidance of fighting

individual battles of human rights). As illustrated in the case of Sport for Youth, future SGD research would do well to build upon and extend the early work of Giulianotti (2011) to critically explore how women working in the sector make meaning of and navigate feminist tensions at the personal, professional, organizational, and political scales. Furthermore, SDP (and ASDP) organizations could take up such findings by working to create an organizational culture, and physical and temporal spaces within the working week, where individuals can openly discuss their struggles, experiences and strategies for negotiating the cultural and gender complexities in distinct working environments. For many of the international staff of Sport for Youth, it was through conversations with their local Afghan colleagues that they came to deeper understandings of the complex intersection of gender, culture, international and local politics, religion and economics that defined the context within which they were working and prompting further reflection on their own assumptions, positioning and practices within this context.

Negotiating Critiques of Development Work

In calling for a postcolonial feminist approach to studying SDP, Hayhurst (2011) encouraged international staff and volunteers to work together with girls and women in the Global South to "build transnational solidarity, respecting difference and using a more 'egalitarian language of alliances, coalitions, and solidarity, instead of salvation'" (Abu-Lughod, 2002, p. 789, cited in; Hayhurst, 2011, p. 546). Continuing, she argues that a "transnational, mutual solidarity needs to start from the embodied subject positions of those driving SGD initiatives" (Hayhurst, 2011, p. 546). Our interviews revealed the international staff working together with local staff in their attempts to break down hierarchies, build more equitable relationships, and design programs that are both culturally appropriate and meaningful to Afghan girls' lives. Through such relationships, each of our international interviewees had come to reflect critically (to varying extents) on their roles and responsibilities and expressed nuanced understandings of the complexities, contradictions and power relations inherent in their own and others development work. In so doing, the international staff of Sport for Youth were neither the oft-criticized "sport evangelists" who espouse only positive views of SDP work nor did they adopt extremely critical views. Instead, their ability to tread a reflexive middle ground aligns them with Caudwell (2007), Forde (2015), Hillyer (2010), Chawansky (2015) and Wilson (2014), all of whom have written about the political complexities of working in SDP spaces and who acknowledge the challenges in maintaining both critique and optimism in SDP work. Of course, having the opportunity to tread this middle ground is a position of privilege that also comes with responsibility.

Two of the international women staff interviewed for this project expressed highly critical understandings of their positions within postcolonial critiques of SDP and came to question some of the Western-centric assumptions underpinning development work. For example, Sarah described her work in Afghanistan as offering "some very interesting gendered experiences" that prompted "so many

questions about going to a space with the intention of creating this liberating programming while not being culturally imperialistic":

> I don't want to save these girls from Islam or anything of the sort, but at the same time it's where do you draw the line between culture and oppression? I don't think wearing a headscarf is necessarily oppressive, but I think when girls don't have a choice whether or not to wear the headscarf, it becomes oppressive. [My experiences of working for Sport for Youth] raised a lot of questions for me that don't just apply to Afghanistan, but just how I conduct myself in the world in general, respecting different ways of doing things and different cultures, and what is inherently moral and what's culturally moral and things like that.

Here Sarah demonstrates a tacit understanding of critiques raised by post-colonial feminists, particularly the "newly emergent discursive strategies that construct first world girls as the saviors of their 'Third World' sisters' as 'missionary girl power'" (Sensoy & Marshall, 2010, p. 296). Continuing, Sarah described her efforts at negotiating a position between critique and optimism:

> I do think cultural exchange can be a really powerful tool and is really important, especially something like skateboarding that virtually couldn't exist in Afghanistan without some kind of cultural exchange, but when does cultural exchange become cultural imperialism and indoctrination?

These quotes from Sarah are representative of the critical awareness among some of the interviewees of the colonial aspects of staff and volunteers from the Global North working in Afghan communities and how such tensions are experienced in different ways at various stages during and following their placements. Similarly, Hazel reflected critically on her personal struggles at various stages during her work in Afghanistan:

> At [Sport for Youth], it was always the question of how much am I allowed to impose my ideas… I wanted to come to you to give you this [action sport], because I think it's great. Then for me it was of course difficult if the girls stopped coming because they now had to get married and their husband, or their brother, didn't allow it.

Continuing, she added further detail to her reflective comments:

> It was like, now we taught them English and they know about the Western lifestyle and the jobs they are doing now [working at Sport for Youth], it was such a heart breaking situation to cope with [early marriage, or young women forced by families into prostitution] and I was angry… and that was really horrible for

> me to deal with. But that really made me think… what right do I have as a woman (it doesn't matter where I come from), to show them what I like? They taste this…let's say honeysuckle for a couple of months or a year, and then they have to go back to their reality. And then is it really their reality? … Sometimes I feel I should just go home and not come back, because it's like, what right do we have as a Western society to go and tell them how to live their lives?

For some women, such as Sarah and Hazel, these personal tensions ultimately contributed to their resignation, whereas for others they informed the sense of urgency to find new approaches to work with local girls and women to devise strategies toward more "egalitarian language of alliances, coalitions, and solidarity, instead of salvation" (Abu-Lughod, 2002, p. 789). In so doing, the international staff of Skateistan were embracing Wilson's (2014) notion of the "middle walker" as they demonstrated the ability to be "sensitive to the problems with and potential of SDP" and actively negotiate the "very meanings of the terms that are the foundations of SDP the field" (pp. 23–24).

Conclusions

In this chapter, we mapped the rise of ASDP organizations and the impact of the "Girl Effect" in such programs. Following this, we offered the case of Sport for Youth, an ASDP NGO that uses action sport to support children and youth development in Afghanistan, as well as in Asian and African countries. Drawing upon interviews with seven Afghan staff and seven international staff and volunteers who have all worked for the Afghan facilities of Sport for Youth, we revealed the passion and commitment involved in their work, as well as their experiences of offering sport and educational programs for girls. In so doing, the second part of this chapter highlighted the need for researchers and SGD program leaders to create space for the lived experiences of foreign *and* local staff of SDP (and ASDP) programs because their perceptions of gender (and the complexities of doing gender work) are highly relational and dependent on the conditions of their lives, as well as their social, cultural, and gender positioning within the local (and their home) societies, within a particular NGO context, and in development work more broadly.

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Chapter 5

Geographies of Gender and Embodiment in Sport for Development Work

Over the past 15 years, the body and embodiment have become a key focus in the broader fields of physical education, sport sociology and physical cultural studies (i.e., Allen-Collinson, 2009; Ford & Brown, 2006; Humberstone, 2011; Thorpe, 2011). Engaging an array of theoretical and methodological approaches, such work has revealed the deeply affective and emotional experiences evoked through sporting participation (i.e., joy, pleasure, pain). It has also offered new insights into the multitude of ways that power operates on and through moving bodies and sporting institutions – enabling and empowering some, discriminating, marginalizing and exploiting others. Alongside the focus of the moving body, sporting geographers have revealed how power works to shape sporting and leisure spaces and places, privileging some bodies (particularly white, male bodies), while marginalizing others (e.g., women, disabled, persons of color) (Green & Singleton, 2007; Johnston, 1996, 1998; Koch, 2017; Marfell, 2019; McEwan, 2002; Pavlidis & Fullagar, 2013; van Ingen, 2003). Somewhat surprisingly, the embodiment and spatialities of sport for development and peace (SDP) have garnered considerably less scholarly attention.

In this chapter we build upon and extend our previous work to explore the value of feminist theories of space and embodiment for examining the gendered experiences of women working in the field (see Thorpe & Chawansky, 2020). In the later part we draw upon interviews with eight international women who have spent extended periods of time working for a sport and education NGO in Afghanistan. This case reveals the various ways these women experienced and managed their Western female bodies within and across work- and nonwork-related public spaces. In so doing, this chapter builds upon and extends current literature in SDP by bringing feminist theories of space, culture and embodiment into conversation with empirical material relating to Western women's experiences of working and living in high-risk development contexts. By focusing on the gendered embodied, lived experiences of international women staff within and across organizational and public spaces, valuable insights can be obtained into

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"the operation of gender within the everyday praxis and experience" (Partis-Jennings, 2019, p. 180) of SDP work.

Feminist Theories of Embodiment in Development

While there has been a strong tendency to "study humanitarianism as a disembodied organizational practice" (Read, 2018, p. 304), feminist scholars have long advocated the importance of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988) and the body is increasingly seen as a legitimate unit of analysis in international relations (Wilcox, 2015) and war (Sylvester, 2013). Building upon such work, some peace and development scholars are drawing on feminist theorizing of "the body, relatedness, vulnerability and the everyday" to "grasp the richness and fluidity of everyday techniques of interaction" and practices that are relevant to such work (Väyrynen, 2019, p. 146). Under the same umbrella, some feminists are also prioritizing the bodies and embodied experiences of Western women working in the fields of development and humanitarianism to understand how global–local power dynamics press upon women's bodies, subjectivities, and their everyday practices and relationships (e.g., Partis-Jennings, 2019, 2017; Read, 2018). As Cook (2005) explains, focusing on experiences of embodiment can help draw our attention "to the multifaceted character of the subjectivities western women bring to their conflicted involvement in projects of imperialism" (p. 354). Extending such work, others have sought to understand how international women workers "are marked by and articulate for themselves, specific kinds of difference" (Partis-Jennings, 2019, p. 179), and how this difference is "always embodied" and "imbued with meanings" (Read, 2018, p. 301). As this literature highlights, the body can be a powerful source of knowledge in development work. Furthermore, focusing on the embodied experiences of international women doing development work can offer valuable insights into the everyday relations of power within highly politicized and racially and culturally specific contexts, and how such forces press upon women's bodies in diverse ways.

Despite a growing body of literature on gender and the body in development, few have explored how bodies are experienced within and across spaces and places. Thus, in this chapter we consider the value of two key bodies of literature for centralizing gendered experiences of embodiment in SDP. First, we provide a brief overview of research on the gendered and embodied experiences of women in "Aidland." Second, we map the rise of feminist geographies of development. In so doing, we argue that working at the intersection of these two literatures allows new feminist geographical understandings of women's moving bodies within and across different spaces in the SDP sector and development work more broadly.

The Gendered Body in "Aidland"

In recent years, the study of the social world of development and conflict resolution specialists has grown exponentially with the ideas of "Aidland" (Apthorpe,

2011) and "Peaceland" (Auteserre, 2014) being commonly used, and much debated, in the field. Importantly, the "land" in each of these terms is not a geographical reference, but rather is used as "a metaphorical concept" to make the point that "the lives and worlds of both those who are 'doing development' and those 'being developed' play a role in the process of programme implementation" (Franklin, 2012, p. 272). Building upon and extending Raymond Apthorpe's (2005) concept of "Aidland," an emerging genre of writing is focusing attention on "the lives, motivations, and personalities" of development professionals, treating them as "an object of inquiry in their own right, rather than primarily the vehicles for the creation and implementation of policy" (Fechter & Hindman, 2011; Harrison, 2013, p. 263; Mosse, 2011; Roth, 2015).

While Aidland studies do provide an important corrective to "more depersonalized accounts of aid-as-machine" (Harrison, 2013, p. 267), concerns have been raised that too many accounts of "doing development" on the ground continue to ignore the embodied experiences of individuals, unwilling or unable to "explore the extent to which desire, fear, hope and awe are produced by, and are producers of, humanitarian space and objects" (Heathershaw, 2016). Of course, both recipients of aid as well as aid and development workers are caught up in these dynamics (Heathershaw, 2016; Smirl, 2012) with radically divergent effects on bodies, subjectivities, and livelihoods within different spaces and places of development.

While the *bodies* of development professionals as they work, socialize and play within and across development geographies have garnered less attention within Aidland literature, feminist development scholars are increasingly exploring the gendered embodied experiences of women in the sector. Herein embodiment is understood within the feminist framework that informs this work, broadly referring to "the centrality of the body as a site of identification and experience" (Partis-Jennings, 2019, p. 181; also see; Väyrynen, 2019). Below we provide an overview of three key approaches that feminist scholars have drawn upon to advance understandings of women's embodied experiences of development work; memoirs, autobiography, and interviews.

Feminist scholars have drawn upon memoirs as valuable sites for exploring the gendered body and experiences of embodiment within contexts of conflict and development (e.g., Dyvik, 2016; Read, 2018; Watson, 2016). For example, in an examination of *Chasing Misery* (Hoppe, 2014) – a collection of essays by female aid workers – Read (2018) aptly explores "embodied difference" in humanitarianism and peacebuilding. Read (2018) recognizes the challenges of understanding and representing embodiment, but argues that humanitarian memoirs "can help us to explore the embodied racialized and gendered experiences of aid in conflict" (p. 302). Critically reading the memoirs with a focus on the body and embodiment, she reveals the women's feelings of "passing" as aid workers, and how they embodied gender in ways that were always relational to imagined "real" aid workers (Read, 2018, p. 300). In reading the stories through a double lens of "flesh witnessing" and "passing," Read (2018, p. 301) presents difference as relational and embodied. Understanding difference "as a gendered relation of power," she identifies the female aid worker as "always Other, even in her own

account": "different, and separated, both from those populations she is attempting to assist and from her life 'back home', searching for the authenticity of experience' in a field where it is still commonly (and mistakenly) assumed that most aid workers are male" (Read, 2018, p. 311).

Others are making important contributions to feminist scholarship on the body and embodiment in humanitarian, conflict and development work through autobiographical writings and reflections. For example, in her book *Intimate Colonialism*, Charlés (2007) offers a candid autoethnographic account of her experiences as a Peace Corps volunteer in the East African nation of Togo. A Hispanic-American woman in her mid-30s at the time, Charlés' (2007) reflections highlight some of the many embodied tensions she experienced between her Western worldviews of feminism and sexuality with culturally specific forms of sensuality in Togo. Another example is in Martini and Jauhola's (2014) collaborative exploration of their personal experiences in two postdisaster contexts. In presenting a dialogue between two autobiographical stories from their development aid work in Aceh, Indonesia, and Haiti, the authors "explore themes of mobility, temporality, intersections of class, gender and 'whiteness'" within the materiality and spatiality of aid work (Martini & Jauhola, 2014, p. 76).

Another key approach being used to gain rich understandings of the embodied experiences of women "doing development" is through interviews, often contextualized within periods of fieldwork. For example, in her ethnographic study of a group of Western women development workers living in Gilgit, northern Pakistan, Cook (2007) combines interviews with her own lived experience in this community to reveal the international women's efforts to construct comfortable lives and identities for themselves, and the political consequences of their actions. Inspired by "a concern to think through my own complicity" (Cook, 2007, p. 2) as a Western tourist and researcher in Pakistan, she offers an incredibly rich and nuanced account of the many ways Western women workers made meaning of their lives in this community. Focusing on the processes of subjectivity formation, Cook (2007) highlights the ways the Western women "perpetuate, legitimate, resist, and transform relations of domination" as they imagine themselves in relation to the people among whom they live and work (p. 6).

Elsewhere Cook (2005) draws upon this same project to explore the significance of clothing choices to the "formation of western women's subjectivities and to the transcultural power relations in this post-colonial setting" (p. 351). While many of the women in Cook's (2005) study devised ways to "rationalize and manage" wearing the local attire (*shalwar kameez*), she observes that the "bodily shame, lack of autonomy, and cultural 'backwardness' supposedly implied by a woman's head-coverings are attitudes even most cultural sympathizers are unwilling to accept as part of their identity in Gilgit" (p. 365). In so doing, she extends literature on the coloniality of Western attitudes toward veiling practices (e.g., Jiwani & Dakroury, 2009; Razack, 2008), to reveal dominant discourses of race, culture and imperialism being perpetuated through the everyday clothing practices of Western development workers in local contexts. Drawing upon research with Canadian women development workers in Africa, Heron (2007) also makes an important contribution to exploring such embodied practices and

understandings of the self as critical to the "politics of accountability." Across these works, it becomes clear that creating space for the voices and embodied lived experiences of international women working in contexts of development provides valuable insights into their (conscious and unconscious) understandings of relationality and difference. These understandings take shape at the intersection of global power relations, local gendered regimes and social hierarchies, and inevitably impact women's relationships and work.

Embodying Gender in the SDP Industry

SDP is perhaps uniquely positioned under the Aidland umbrella. For example, SDP researchers have examined the motivations and experiences of staff and volunteers, some of whom work (or have worked) across a range of other development and/or aid organizations. Scholars have increasingly considered various aspects of work experiences within SDP organizations (see, for example, Gallant, Sherry, & Nicholson, 2015; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011; MacIntosh, Couture, & Spence, 2015; Shilbury, Sotiriadou, & Green, 2008). In particular, Welty Peachey and colleagues have engaged in a range of projects focused on leadership (Welty Peachey & Burton, 2017) and the motives, retention factors, and rewards of volunteers (Welty Peachey, Borland, Lobpries, & Cohen, 2015; Welty Peachey, Welty Peachey, Lyras, Cohen, Bruening, & Cunningham, 2014) in the field of SDP. In so doing, their findings draw many parallels with literature in Aidland studies more broadly, including largely overlooking issues of gender in development work. However, a key distinction evident in this work is that many SDP workers and volunteers have a passion for sport, and/or particular skill sets associated with sport or physical activities, often with the assumption that they can help make the world better through offering improved access and opportunities to the sports that gave them so much at critical stages in their own lives.

With critical scholars increasingly questioning the assumptions underpinning the SDP movement, some are examining the assumptions of staff and volunteers and how these are navigated in the field. For example, focusing particularly on the experiences of volunteer interns of SDP organizations from a sociocultural perspective, Darnell (2010) described a tendency to interpret difference as "markers of underdevelopment" which worked to sustain the neoliberal focus of development (p. 396). As Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) note, if any development is to be accomplished through SDP programming then projects must be aware that "sport-based development workers have a double-burden: They must offer successful athletic activities [programmes using sport and/or physical activities] as well as operate sophisticated, self-conscious development programming" (p. 290).

Despite a growing body of literature in management studies and sociology of sport on volunteer and staff experiences in the field of SDP – and the 'double burden' of this work – women's experiences of volunteering and working for SDP organizations have been given much less attention (for exceptions, see Darnell, 2010; Thorpe & Chawansky, 2017). Important feminist work, however, has focused on the embodied experiences of women SDP researchers in the field. For

example, Caudwell (2007), Hillyer (2010) and Chawansky (2015) have all written about the emotional, embodied and political complexities of working in SDP spaces (also see Chapter 2). In this chapter we build upon and extend such literature by bringing the contributions of feminist development scholars into dialogue with geographers of development to explore how the gendered body (of women workers) is lived within and across local spaces of SDP. In so doing, we hope this approach facilitates new considerations and reflections as to what such everyday embodied experiences might tell us about the gendered power relations within SDP, and development and humanitarianism more broadly.

Feminist Geographies of Development

Feminist geographers have long focused on women's embodied and bodily experiences in social spaces (Johnston & Longhurst, 2010). Much of this work has explored and problematized gendered conceptions of public and private spaces (Armstrong & Squires, 2002; Landes, 1998). An enduring theme within this literature has been women's experiences of risk, fear and safety within different spaces, including the home, outdoors, public parks, workplaces, and urban environments (Valentine, 1989). Feminist sport and leisure scholars too have explored the gendered risks associated with particular sporting and recreational spaces, and women's embodied experiences of fear and risk management (Green & Singleton, 2007; Toffoletti, Thorpe, Pavlidis, Olive, & Moran, 2021).

While space appears in many of the feminist development studies cited in the previous section, it tends to be secondary in the analysis. Yet, since the late 1980s, feminist geographers have increasingly contributed to the field of development studies through their work on gendered subjects and practices. Drawing upon postcolonial and transnational feminisms, feminist geographers of development have offered multiscalar approaches ranging from "the bodily to the globalized spheres, gendered and racialized nationalism, neoliberal globalization, and multiple axes of difference among women and men" (Radcliffe, 2006, p. 527). Some critical feminist geographers are also raising important questions about the processes of "doing development." Of particular relevance here is the work of Lahiri-Dutt (2017) who makes a strong case for rethinking the "normalised presence and civilising agency of (mostly) white western women in the space of development" (p. 327). Similarly, Heron (2007) concludes her study of white, middle-class Canadian women development workers in Africa by stating that:

> In the end, our desire for development, while a manifestation of the helping imperative, can be more accurately understood as a profound desire for the self. And it is this, as much as the ways in which we are discursively produced as white middle-class women to understand the sites of development, that shapes our seeing, our negotiations, and our resistance to our positions in relations of power once we are "there." We need to understand this if we want

> to become more accountable, and thus, find ourselves a "place of integrity" in this world.
>
> (p. 156)

We concur with many of Heron's (2007) and Lahiri-Dutt's (2017) critiques. However, we are concerned that moving toward "mutual understandings of difference" are not necessarily enhanced when we conceive of white Western women – the often less visible (relative to white men) "doers of development" – as a singular, homogenous category. As illustrated in the work of Partis-Jennings (2017, 2019), Read (2018) and others, we should problematize the notion that "international" actors can be seen as a homogenous category. According to Read (2018), such understandings of the lived, gendered nuances and complexities of development work can be enhanced with a focus on embodiment: "insisting on humanitarianism as an embodied practice allows for the differences between those international aid workers to be interrogated, and the implications of the power relations which produce these differences to be questioned" (p. 305).

Rather than assuming Western women development workers' motivations and assumptions apriori, we argue that feminist SDP scholarship would do well to create space for the bodily and embodied experiences of women working within and across spaces of work and leisure in SDP. Such work could further take inspiration from the work of Smirl (2008, 2015) who brought a feminist approach to examining the spatial dimensions of international humanitarian response. Her scholarship on how various work- and nonwork-related spaces of aid – i.e., cars, compounds, and hotels – shape humanitarianism is exemplary, and highlights the importance of paying attention to the power and politics within and across the spaces and places of Aidland. In this chapter we work at the intersection of feminist geographies of development and embodiment, to explore international women SDP professionals' gendered experiences of embodiment in public and work spaces in Kabul. In so doing, we get a better understanding of how, for some women, their embodied experiences within and across working and nonworking spaces of development can lead to partial knowledge, heightened reflexivity, critique of the development industry, and deep questioning as to the very identity politics and rethinking of relationships and responsibilities that Lahiri-Dutt (2017) and others have been calling for.

Extending this work, feminist SDP approaches could expand ways of knowing and producing knowledge in the field by paying attention to SDP staff and volunteers' embodied experiences across spaces and places of work (i.e., indoor and outdoor courts, fields, stadium, climbing walls, skate parks, classrooms), leisure (i.e., social gatherings with fellow workmates, expats, spaces of sport and fitness), and objects of SDP (i.e., basketballs, soccer balls, shoes, skateboards, backpacks, uniforms). With a focus on the geographies of embodiment, we might come to new understandings of how SDP staff and volunteers experience their bodies – as physically active, gendered, sexualized, racialized, even 'othered' – within and across indoor and outdoor sporting spaces, mixed or female-only spaces, as well as public spaces (i.e., the streets, cafes, supermarkets) and other spaces where SDP workers may interact with each other and the local communities. More

importantly, how do such experiences prompt SDP workers to respond? Or put differently, do such experiences encourage new questions, insights, and/or actions in their everyday SDP work practices and relations with local staff, students, and community members? In the upcoming sections, we explore such questions with a case study focused on the embodied experiences of the international women staff of Sport for Youth* (pseudonym).

Navigating Bodies Out of Place: The Embodied Experiences of International SDP Women Staff

To illustrate the potential of feminist geographies and embodiment scholarship for rethinking SDP, in the remainder of this chapter we draw upon semi-structured interviews conducted between early 2015 and mid-2017 with eight international women staff that had spent extended periods of time (at least six months) working in Afghanistan (Thorpe & Chawansky, 2021). As discussed in Chapter Four, the larger project sought to understand the roles, responsibilities, and lived experiences of local and international staff of Sport for Youth, and their experiences of working for an NGO focused on girls' sporting and educational opportunities in the context of Afghanistan.

During the first interview conducted for this project, the international woman staff member reflected on some of the challenges she perceived of being a Western woman in Afghanistan and particularly her embodied experiences in public spaces. This conversation inspired new lines of questioning in subsequent interviews that sought to further explore women's lived experiences of the gendered body within and across public and work spaces of SDP. Importantly, the purpose of this case study is not to offer generalizable statements about all Western women working in Afghanistan, but rather to highlight the potential in an embodied approach for understanding difference as lived and practiced by Western women as the "doers of development" (Lahiri-Dutt, 2017), and more specifically, the "doers" of sport for development. It is also worth noting that the women included herein were initially motivated to work for this particular NGO (with a particular focus on using action sports to empower Afghan girls) because it appeared (from a distance) to align with some of their own feminist values (see Thorpe & Chawansky, 2016, 2017). Thus, parallels could be drawn with other international women workers who approach their SDP work with similar sensibilities.

The eight participants (pseudonyms used throughout) were in their mid to late twenties at the time of interviews, and primarily from Canada, Germany, and the United States. Participants had worked for the organization for an average of 3.5 years. At the time of interviews, some were still working in Afghanistan, but due to the time span of this project, other interviews were conducted when staff had left Afghanistan and were either working for the same NGO at the international office or at other facilities, or had moved onto other work. The further the participants were temporally and physically removed from the organization, the more critical and open the participants seemed to be in speaking about their experiences in Afghanistan. All were highly educated (with undergraduate or

Masters degrees in development, international relations, and/or education) with extensive experience traveling and working overseas, including less developed countries. It is worth noting that one of the participants (Joanne) talked about her Middle Eastern heritage, and how this impacted how her body was read and interpreted in the context of Afghanistan. As is discussed later, while she "could technically pass as Afghan" because of her skin color, her Western identity (and outsider status) was read through other aspects of her bodily deportment (gait, posture, language), which further complicated her positioning in Afghanistan.

Interviews were conducted via Skype with each over an hour in duration. As previously noted, the discussion focused on two key themes: (1) the efforts of the organization to cater to the unique needs of Afghan children and particularly girls, and (2) the personal experiences of the staff working in this high-risk location. The embodied tensions experienced between these two topics emerged as a significant theme. Yet, it should be noted that the embodied experiences of international women workers was not the most significant theme emerging from the data, with some participants focusing more on discussing their programs and day-to-day operations (see Thorpe & Chawansky, 2020).

Nonetheless, each of the participants offered vivid reflections on the struggles and tensions they experienced in public spaces in Kabul, with some commenting on their experiences within and across other spaces including compounds, vehicles, the Sport for Youth facility, their own and others' homes, mosques, and leisure settings (i.e., cafes, yoga classes, parties). Some of these spaces prompted highly emotive and affective experiences and memories of being in Afghanistan. For example, one of the women recalled her experience of being picked up from the Kabul airport for the first time:

> Landing in Kabul was a cocktail of lots of different emotions. On the one hand, I was focused on getting used to my headscarf. I was also very touched by [the two male staff members], that these two strangers who were so caring and supportive. They came and picked me up in this crazy car. The car alone was an experience because they had a little golden vase on the dashboard, and carpet and curtains. It was about to become autumn, there was lots of rubbish around, the city was stinking actually and the smell filled the little car. As we drove through the countryside, it was grey and there was all this dust and barbed wire, and army soldiers everywhere. But it was a crazy mixture of colours, both grey and very colourful. I will always remember that car ride.

Due to the varied significance of these themes (and length restrictions), herein we focus primarily on the women's experiences within public spaces, with some discussion of the indoor Sport for Youth facilities. Taking our lead from cultural theorists such as Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1990), we adopted an interpretive approach that allowed space for participants to inhabit discontinuous and contradictory subjectivities within and across space.

The "Embodied Geopolitics" of Western Women in Afghanistan

To date, a few feminist scholars have explored the corporeal experiences of those (local and international staff) working in development spaces in Afghanistan. Fluri (2011) examined "the embodied geopolitics" in Afghanistan by way of "gender roles and relations" among and between international workers and Afghan recipients of international aid and development (p. 519). In examining the bodily experiences of male and female international staff, alongside those of Afghans implicated and involved in processes of development and aid work, Fluri (2011) offers a critical reading of corporeality based on gender, dress, mobility and sexuality. She explores the body as a contested site that reinforces, challenges, resists and reformulates notions of modernity and tradition following the US invasion of Afghanistan. More recently, Partis-Jennings (2019) draws upon interviews with female international humanitarian actors in Afghanistan to examine their "experiences of performing their gender in hybridized ways" (p. 178). According to Partis-Jennings (2019), postconflict Afghanistan was a very important context in which to explore "how gender threads through the everyday praxis of peacebuilding" (p. 180). Throughout her interviews, many of the foreign women discussed their experiences of difference (as not entirely male or female) containing a "complex uncertainty that was both gendered and racialised":

> The interaction between some concept of "foreign" and some concept of the "female" played out as a site of friction in which "porous boundaries" between different notions of woman were marked by distinctions between foreign and local bodies in terms of differential freedom and access.
>
> (p. 185)

To explain these context-specific experiences of positionality, Partis-Jennings (2019) adapted the concept of "third gender," which she refers to as "a kind of embodied, performed hybridity." As she makes clear, such experiences of gender are firmly located within the Afghan context: "perceived gendered expectations of Afghanistan are mixed with the bodies, behaviors and expectations of international women to form something that contains gendered elements of masculinity, femininity, the 'illiberal' and the liberal social orders" (p. 183). Partis-Jennings' (2019) work has many important parallels with the findings of this study.

In the remainder of this chapter we engage in dialogue with feminist literature on embodiment and geographical understandings of development, and the empirical material from the interviews with international women working in Afghanistan. The following discussion consists of three main parts. First, we explain how the women SDP workers experienced their Western bodies in public spaces (particularly streets and markets), including managing eye contact, clothing choices, and responses to various forms of harassment and assault. Second, we offer a brief discussion of the significance of the gendered, moving, sporting body inside and outside of the NGO facilities, and how the Sport for Youth building became a "bubble" for the women in this study. Across these

parts we reveal the various ways these women experienced and managed their Western gendered moving bodies within and across work- and nonwork-related public spaces. Finally, we consider how such experiences of embodiment prompted highly reflexive and, in some cases, critical feminist understandings of SDP work in Afghanistan and beyond.

Western Women in the Streets of Kabul

Writing about the rights of Afghan women during the late 1980s and 1990s, Moghadam (2002) explained that women were largely "banned from participation and decision-making, and from the public space itself" (p. 19). During this time in Afghan history, the majority of women were required to wear a burqa, and largely confined to their homes, denied the right to schooling, and excluded from any form of public decision-making. Writing specifically about Afghan women's limited access to public space, Moghadam (2002) explained how men continued to control not only their female relatives' access to public space but also all women's access to social spaces. She describes the mechanisms of such control as varied, including "familial and household rules and constraints; compulsory veiling; laws that restrict women's mobility and travel; the appropriation of coffee shops and tea houses by men; and men's tendency to stare, leer, or touch women" (p. 28). Despite concerns raised among feminist geographers about the public–private distinction, Moghadam (2002) makes a strong case that the concepts of public space and private space "are perhaps nowhere more relevant than in Afghanistan, where women's access to public space has long been politicized, contested, and denied" (p. 28).

Of course, not all Afghan women accept the patriarchal code and social structures that restrict their social and physical mobilities. Indeed, "the greatest threat to the patriarchal community and the power of men is posed by 'public women' – those who work, or go to school, or even walk from one place to another" (Moghadam, 2002, p. 28). Fluri (2011) further explains that women's limited access to mobility within public spaces has been reinforced through clothing as well as (in some cases) the expectation "to travel with a mahram [unmarriageable kin whom acts as an escort] as an additional layer of protection to her bodily privacy and integrity" (p. 525).

A number of feminist scholars have explored how Afghan women have been excluded from public spaces (Fluri, 2011; Moghadam, 2002), with some offering a counternarrative that focuses on how Afghan women are also strategic in navigating social spaces (Rostami-Povey, 2004). Understandably, less work has explored how Western women working for international NGOs experience such cultural codes and restrictions. This is the focus herein, though the broader context of cultural and gender relations in Afghanistan, and treatment of women in public spaces, are important considerations throughout.

For the participants in this study, over time their organization had come to put in place restrictions on women staff accessing public spaces – always covered and never alone – in efforts to protect their safety amid growing risk management concerns (see Thorpe, 2020b). As Hazel recalled, "It was forbidden for me to walk

alone in public due to a high risk of kidnapping foreign females." While many of the women struggled with such limitations, most understood and accepted organizational policy on this matter:

> There were a lot of questions for me being someone who has always been very independent and outspoken, and is a feminist and all of these things. I really grappled with needing to be escorted everywhere by a male colleague. Yes, I really missed being able to walk somewhere by myself, but at the same time I had no real desire to do that in Afghanistan because I didn't want to deal with what would come as a result of that.
>
> (Sandra)

According to Roth (2011), "risk is overall downplayed" by development and aid workers (p. 151). While this was also the case among our participants, most of the women did discuss their experiences of fear, particularly in public spaces. For example, Anna recalls a situation in which a male colleague was picking her up after a conference, but asked her to meet him at the end of the road: "I felt really, really uncomfortable walking by myself down the street just to meet him". Another participant describes the challenge of keeping risk in perspective and coping with her fear:

> I knew that realistically and statistically speaking, it would be very, very unlikely to be caught in some IED attack or to be kidnapped, but there's just that more reptilian side of your brain that's constantly on alert and stressed. … I would have these horrific dreams of being kidnapped and really horrible stuff happening. I felt completely exhausted.
>
> (Julie)

While some experienced chronic fear and anxiety throughout their term, others found much excitement in the high-risk environment in which they were working. For example, one participant admitted that while "I was a little bit scared… it also gave me a little kick, this whole masculine energy of war" (Marie). Just as the women's perceptions of, and responses to, risk in Afghanistan differed, so too did their interest in accessing public spaces. Many of the women expressed desire to get out of their work and home facilities, with comments made about occasionally enjoying yoga and salsa at the Embassies, doing action sports in deserted parts of the countryside, playing pool at hotels, visiting cafes, and shopping to buy clothing and shoes. But some admitted to being "quite nervous a lot of the time" (Julie), and thus not seeking out visits to public spaces.

Some participants also made observations that mirror findings from Partis-Jennings (2019) recent work on Western women in Afghanistan. For example, Julie noted that, as a Western woman, she was able to access places that Afghan women could not:

> If you're a foreigner, in my experience, you tend to be treated as this kind of third gender where the rules don't really apply to you if you're a female foreigner. You can be in female spaces, *and* you can be in male spaces... There are lots of those kinds of nuances and unwritten rules…

While white women development workers can become "honorary men" in some spaces of development work (Heron, 2007), such positionings are always specific to the cultural and gendered hierarchies within a particular location. As Partis-Jennings (2019) explains, in the context of Afghanistan, "third gender" acts as "a hybrid identification framework in everyday praxis, symptomatic of the liberal peace paradigm in Afghanistan in which 'international' and 'local' norms interact" (p. 179). As well as offering parallels with Partis-Jennings' (2019) research, the comments from Julie are also suggestive of the spatial and gendered dimensions of the "liminal subjectivities" (Smirl, 2012) of international women development professionals in Afghanistan. They are always "in-between" and "out of place," not fitting readily into either male or female Afghan spaces.

It is worth noting that the ability to cross over and navigate male and female spaces was not experienced unanimously by the women. For example, Marie observed that, as a Western woman, she tended to have greater access to culturally defined male spaces than her Afghan women friends and colleagues. This was particularly the case when she accompanied a Western male colleague to meetings or to have tea with Afghan male leaders. However, when she was invited by her Afghan women friends into their homes – into their private, family spaces, such as the kitchen – she was treated as an Afghan woman:

> We worked together on the food in the kitchen. Then we got served the left over food that the males did not finish eating… we women just ate what was left over. The bones from the chicken the men had eaten. It was so normal for the ladies of the house; they did not know anything else. I was gobsmacked. I kept silent though, because I wanted to fit in and did not want to embarrass the host.

Such comments reflect Abu-Lughod's (1998, 2002) important work that examines the ways women build solidarity, coalitions and language of alliances, instead of pursuing narratives of "salvation" or feeling "sorry" for women in the Middle East.

Later in the interview, Marie described other incidents such as men jumping ahead in queues while shopping or waiting for a taxi, "as if it is the most normal thing to do." She acknowledges that while at the time these seem like "little things," they "built up and made me feel like shit." Such examples highlight the space-specific dimensions of Partis-Jennings' (2019) conceptualizing of "third gender" in Afghanistan, where bodies are read differently in public (i.e., supermarkets, taxi queues) and private (i.e., meetings, Afghan homes) spaces depending on who one accompanies. Furthermore, this highlights some of the

highly affective experiences (i.e., pleasure, fear, sensuality, disgust, shame) that are closely related to women's experiences of embodiment in Afghanistan. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter, we suggest the affective dimensions of women's embodied experiences within and across work- and nonwork-specific spaces of Aidland are deserving of further examination (Partis-Jennings, 2017).

The Gaze and the Female SDP Worker as "Spectacle"

Another theme that emerged from our analysis was how the women experienced and navigated the "male gaze" in public spaces, particularly in the streets and market places. As Garland-Thomson (2005) writes:

> Staring witnesses an intrusive interest on the part of the starer and thrusts an uneasy attention on the object of the stare. At once transgressive and intimate…. staring is thus a kind of potent social choreography that marks bodies by enacting a dynamic visual exchange between a spectator and a spectacle.
>
> (p. 31)

Recognizing the power in the gaze, feminist scholars have long articulated the normative heterosexual male gaze (e.g., Dolan, 1988), and postcolonial scholars have identified the problematics of the colonializing gaze (e.g., Kaplan, 1997). As foreign women working in Afghanistan, each of our participants felt the presence of the gaze. For example, Joanne explains:

> Just driving around town, I definitely got some very, very leery looks… there is a weird feeling of exposure just being a woman in public space in Afghanistan, where you feel very on display in a way that's very sexualized, especially being a foreign woman.

Another participant also acknowledged the constant presence of the gaze, but did not experience it in sexual terms: "The eyes are always there. I felt like I had eyes on me all the time, but for me it wasn't necessarily sexual all the time, it was often very curious" (Tess).

According to Partis-Jennings (2017), the combination of "a perceived patriarchal context" with "security routines… which rely on hypermasculine signifiers" works to "create and perpetuate the conditions in which the female (for both internationals and Afghans) is marked with insecurity" (p. 411). In this context of female insecurity, one of our participants described developing her own gaze as a coping strategy, directing her sight away from hypermasculine symbols of war and toward objects of beauty:

> Of course I saw the weapon, but I tried to focus on other things. I think weapons are very powerful things – they draw your attention and they scare you, but that's amplifying the power. Instead, I

> tried to focus on the balloon person or the woman who was wearing these amazing shoes on the horrible dirt roads. I was trying to focus on these things as a coping mechanism.
>
> (Marie)

Some of our participants also spoke about navigating eye contact in ways that minimize feelings of being "out of place": "I try my best not to look at people because I could technically pass as Afghan, but most people can tell that I am not in the way that I dress and comport myself" (Joanne). While some tried to navigate eye contact – directing their gaze down and away from others – in their efforts to "pass" as Afghan, or at least, not to feel so "out of place," clothing was another important element in how the Western women negotiated their bodies in public spaces.

Clothing and Covering

For Afghan women in public spaces, clothing tends to be loose fitting and with the headscarf (hijab), with some wearing the chadori and burqa. According to Fluri (2011), Afghan dress for women provides "spatial privacy to the body"; "it visually identifies the covered body as a private space that is not for public view (by men outside one's kinship group)" (p. 523). Continuing, she explains that both international workers and Afghan women in her study wore clothing that primarily covered the body, but "covering the head/hair remained a much more politically charged and contentious issue" (Fluri, 2011, p. 523). Similar to the Western women working in northern Pakistan in Cook's (2005) study, some of the international women workers in Fluri's (2011) project were adamant about not wearing a headscarf in order "to preserve their personal identity, autonomy and in many cases to 'model' alternative forms of dress" (p. 523). However, choosing not to cover as a way of "setting an example" is idealizing the Western feminine position as normative (Fluri, 2011, p. 523), or worse, culturally superior (Cook, 2005). But as Kabeer (1994) and Parpart (1995, 2009) and colleagues (Parpart, Rai, & Staudt, 2002), remind us, it is important to explore the nuances of resistance, agency, voice, and embodied lived experience in gendered development work.

In contrast to the clothing practices of Western women in research by Cook (2005) and Fluri (2011), all of the women in our project wore the headscarf at all times in public spaces and within their organizational facilities. Some mentioned initial tensions in wearing the headscarf similar to concerns raised by women in previous work (Cook, 2005; Fluri, 2011), but even while acknowledging that it wasn't part of their cultural identity, most came to respect and even enjoy wearing it. For example, Joanne explained:

> Wearing a headscarf is not part of my identity, but it is part of my ancestral culture. Going in wearing the headscarf, it just felt like I was participating and following the etiquette of the society that I

> was living in. Initially, I felt impartial to wearing a headscarf, and I then grew to like it. It became a security blanket and I really missed it after that… having something to cover my face with when I was making uncomfortable eye contact or things like that.

Embracing the headscarf as a "security blanket" to avoid the male gaze and uncomfortable eye contact was similar to some of the international women in previous studies that also identified the headscarf as "a necessary form of dress in order to avoid stares or verbal harassment in public space" (Cook, 2005; Fluri, 2011, p. 523).

Many of the participants in our project purchased Afghan clothing for themselves shortly upon arrival. For example, Marie recalls: "I bought my clothes in Kabul, so in that way I was also feeling more local." Continuing, however, she notes that despite such efforts, she could never disguise herself as an Afghan woman (despite wanting to at times) because bodies are carefully read for all signs and symbols of identity, belonging, and difference. Despite such efforts, Marie knew that others "could notice I was foreign by the way I walk, because my steps had more energy than an Afghan woman, like more certainty."

Other culturally specific corporeal subtleties were observed, with some modifying adornment practices. For example, some opted to wear wedding rings: "On my first day we went shopping for Afghan clothes and a wedding ring. I often pretended to be married to save a lot of hassle" (Anna). Another removed her glasses to avoid particular readings of her body: "I didn't wear my glasses in public. There was this tendency that women with glasses appeared to be western and slutty" (Ruby). In these small examples of the corporeal awareness and decisions being made by the women, we see how much cultural knowledge is obtained in and through the body, and how the women sought to navigate cultural body codes with some levels of cultural sensitivity both out of respect for the society in which they were living and working, but also to minimize risk to their own personal safety.

In sum, clothing is an "embodied set of cultural codes," and thus "a vital part of performing subjectivity and enacting power" (Cook, 2005, p. 357). In contrast to the Western women in research by Cook (2005) and Fluri (2011), however, the participants in this study are not "forg[ing] ambivalent and conflicted subjectivities in relation to indigenous Muslim women as they perpetuate and resist accepted logocentric imperial thinking" (p. 366). Rather, they are giving careful consideration to their clothing choices and trying to find ways to embody cultural norms and values in respectful ways. In discussing their clothing practices, there were no comments that suggested the assumed superiority of Western clothing. Arguably, this example highlights differences from the Western women workers in previous research, particularly regarding their relational positioning to Afghan women. This case also highlights the need to critically examine how underlying relations of neocolonial power impact SGD programs. Such analyses are imperative for uncovering how notions of "salvation" and "solidarity" influence and are embedded (and embodied) in Global North/South relations.

Assault and Bodies "out of Place"

As a growing body of industry reports demonstrate, women working in development and aid contexts experience high levels of physical and sexual abuse both inside and outside of their organizations (Costello, 2018; Norbert, 2017; Spencer, 2018). Despite a number of reports documenting the prevalence of sexual harassment in Aidland, few studies (if any) have focused on women's embodied experiences of such events within particular spaces, or how they respond and make meaning of such incidents in specific cultural, work- and nonwork-related contexts.

For the women in this study, the streets were a place that held particularly high risk, with all of the women experiencing versions of sexual assault:

> There were a few occasions where I was in a market and wasn't close enough to a male colleague and I was groped. … Things of that nature felt very unsettling and felt violating and aggressive.
>
> (Ruby)

> One time a man intentionally bumped into me in the marketplace and grabbed my bottom. The [Afghan] male colleague I was with handled it in a very Afghan way where he very discreetly picked up a knife from the local butcher and very calmly whisper threatened him. Then a crowd started to form and we walked away as quickly as we could.
>
> (Joanne)

Some of the initial volunteers recalled a number of incidents in which they were given a clear message (i.e., tomatoes being thrown, grabbing) that they did not belong in particular male-defined public spaces:

> This is the general feeling I had over the whole time I was there, even when going to the small cities outside of Kabul. But I was grabbed two times. One time I had tomatoes thrown at me while [skating] on the street. I was with a couple of kids and [a male staff member] from Australia, but he looked a little bit Afghan. There was a couple of times for example when I used to go to buzkashi, which is a horse riding game, and also a football match. Also I went to a holiday spot and there was grabbed on my arse. One guy came to me, grabbed me around the waist, everybody was laughing and I was like what do we do now. I ran behind them once and wanted to hit them and they got super scared.
>
> (Hazel)

Through such experiences, it became clear that actively participating in sporting activities (i.e., doing action sports outdoors) and attending sporting events were not appropriate for Afghan or foreign women alike. It is worth noting that the examples offered by Hazel were not common across our interviewees. As one of the first international volunteers working for Sport for Youth, Hazel recalled initially enjoying the adventure of living and working in Afghanistan and embracing opportunities to do action sports and enjoy other social activities (i.e., buzkashi, football) in public outdoor spaces. However, such opportunities were not available to other women staff that joined the NGO later, when more risk avoidance strategies were put in place. In this way, some of the early women staff of Sport for Youth learned the unspoken cultural and gender rules through trial and error in outdoor public spaces, with this knowledge subsequently shaping formal and informal organizational policy.

In their responses to incidents of assault in public spaces, each of the women took into consideration their own cultural assumptions and embraced local recommendations as how best to act:

> I had my ass grabbed several times. We were advised to get angry and shout swear words in Dari. This was the best response for me. It worked and the men laughed but ran away. There was no such system as going to the police.
>
> (Marie)

The understanding that there is "no such system" for reporting (both with the authorities and within their organizations) is a common reason women aid and development workers give for not reporting sexual assault (Humanitarian Women's Network, 2015). Other participants explained some of the cultural negotiations and considerations that they went through following an assault, and in preparing for the next:

> At the time, I felt it was important to behave as much as possible as the Afghan females around me. To not make a fuss and to not be different, because of security issues. I did not want to get any attention on me, and just wanted to be safe and not noticed.
>
> (Tess)

> What I tried to do was not react like I might in the western world. I also tried to not judge myself in that moment as a western person because, of course, I have those rules in my head. I come from a western society where women, most of the time, are nearly treated equally as the men. I tried not to judge myself on my feminist values from the western world because everything is very different in Kabul.
>
> (Marie)

In such comments, we see parallels with the work of Fluri (2011) where she reveals there are "territorial and corporeal tensions between 'universal' discourses of human rights and 'Western' embodiments of sexual harassment and violence" (p. 531). Continuing, she explains that such tensions illustrate "the fissures and fractures of these 'universal' paradigms that at one geopolitical scale attempt to project moral superiority while at the scale of human interaction often counter these assumed moralities" (Fluri, 2011, p. 532). For our participants, experiences of sexual harassment prompted some highly reflexive (re)considerations of their own positioning in Afghanistan as Western development workers, as well as raising questions about their own understandings of women's rights that are not universal but rather located within specific sociocultural geographies.

Importantly, some of our participants took care to make disclaimers surrounding their experiences of sexual assault in public spaces. One woman explained that, while some Afghan men might grab women in public spaces as a way of reinforcing that they are "out of place," most of the Afghan men that she worked with treated her with "respect and empathy": "Most of the Afghan men I encountered were very kind, respectful and supportive to me" (Marie). Herein, we see participants refusing to accept the "pathologised image of the Afghan man" as a dangerous misogynist that has come to dominate the mainstream Western imaginary (Manchanda, 2015, p. 130). Another of our participants commented: "From my observations, these situations happen to Afghan women more often, or just as often, as to western women. Some of my Afghan female friends never left the house without an umbrella to hit potential gropers" (Ruby). This comment reflects a common theme of the Western women recognizing the agency of Afghan women, and learning from their strategies to safely access and negotiate public spaces. Some were also careful not to consider such offences out of context, or to reinforce problematic binaries of the "west" treating women well, and Afghanistan treating women poorly: "Of course it was uncomfortable [getting grabbed], but it happens here too [in Europe]. I had my butt grabbed on a train here [European city] recently" (Anna). Although subtle, in such comments we see participants resisting problematic "war on terror" narratives that positioned Afghan women as needing saving, and the West as the most suitable savior because of their enlightened gender relations (Kandiyoti, 2007a, 2007b; Wibben, 2016).

As reported in various feminist accounts of the abuses women experience in Aidland, many professional women development and aid workers (learn to) accept sexual assault as part of their work in high-risk or developing contexts. While such discussions have not been on the agenda in SDP, this was certainly the case among our participants, with one woman noting quite matter-of-factly: "I'm lucky I did not get raped or kidnapped, only groped, ignored and insulted for being a woman." It is common in the development and aid sector for such experiences to be normalized by both men and women within NGOs. One of our participants expressed her concerns to a senior Western woman colleague after her first experience of being physically accosted in a market, only to have the woman laugh and tell her to "get used to it" (Hazel). Another commented: "With the western women I talked about this with, the attitude was, 'stop making a fuss

and get on with it. There is nothing you can do anyway and there are much more important things to get on with'" (Sandra).

This rationale is common in the sector where the "real work" (e.g., reducing poverty, educating children, empowering women) is much more important than individualized assaults on women's bodies. Others sought advice from their Afghan friends and colleagues, many of whom adopted practical responses: "With the older Afghan women who I spoke with about this, they had the attitude that nothing can be done, so just get on with it. We need to survive! Cook food or take care of the kids" (Marie). Each of our participants had experienced some type of sexual harassment while in the streets, but all were highly resistant to painting a picture of victimhood in the context of Afghanistan. Their experiences were always understood as relational to those of their Afghan female colleagues and friends ("these situations happen to Afghan women more often," Ruby), other countries that they had traveled to ("Afghanistan wasn't nearly as bad as I thought it was going to be, I found Egypt so much worse in terms of men harassing me on the street," Sandra), as well as their "home" countries ("It happens here too," Anna). The volunteers and staff "resistance to painting victimhood" in the context of Afghanistan was both a point of (informal) discussion among Sport for Youth staff, as well as something that was experientially learned during their time in Afghanistan.

Indoor Sporting Facilities as the "Bubble"

Working in Afghanistan is demanding for both male and female staff, but the social constraints upon women staff (i.e., always accompanied by a male when outside the program facilities, unable to drive) meant that their local mobilities and social interactions were particularly constrained. According to some of our interviewees, the difficulties they experienced when leaving the Sport for Youth facilities and entering public spaces also meant they chose to do so very rarely. Yet, social isolation and lack of "work–life balance" took its toll during their longer placements:

> The first couple of years I worked at [Sport for Youth], we worked six days a week. We would mostly hang out with each other. Firstly because you live and work with the same people, and secondly because we probably had the most in common out of anyone else that was there. It was a default. We do more than other [ex-pats]… [We'd] still go shopping and do stuff, but you're just working, basically. It's kind of strange. It's definitely not normal.
>
> (Julie)

Whereas some of the women embraced opportunities to leave work and home spaces and to interact with Afghan locals and expats in public and social environments, others withdrew from public spaces as a result of fears and concerns for their safety.

To date, much of the research in Aidland studies (and similarly the limited research on SDP staff experiences) has focused on the interactions and experiences within work-specific spaces. In so doing, researchers have revealed a common theme of workers often referring to their organizations, and the aid community more broadly, as a "bubble" or "cocoon" (see Mosse, 2011). Some of our participants made similar comments ("it's like a mini paradise inside"). The women described the uniqueness of the Sport for Youth facility, which offered an "oasis" from the physical and cultural "stresses" they experienced outside the facility and in public spaces, and opportunities for them to express themselves through familiar and enjoyable movement experiences:

> When you're in Afghanistan everything is hectic and messy. You're also kind of constantly worried, well not worried, but aware of your surroundings and not trying to offend anyone or do anything that's breaking a social custom that you don't even know about. Inside [Sport for Youth], it's like a mini paradise in Afghanistan – kids and girls can run around. There's this massive space, it's a space where kids can play. Everyone is still dressing and acting appropriately by Afghanistan standards, but the space feels so much more free and so much more safe than anywhere else in the country.
>
> (Hazel)

Research on urban-based action sports has shown that in many Western countries, the gender relations between participants are unique in that they navigate access and share the same built (i.e., purposefully built parks) and found (i.e., streets) environments (i.e., Abulhawa, 2020; Atencio, Beal, & Wilson, 2009; Bäckström, 2013). Furthermore, research has shown that urban-based action sport participants develop unique relationships with the built environment through their creative readings of urban spaces (Borden, 2019; Glenney & Mull, 2018). For the women in our study, all of whom were active action sport participants, the context of Afghanistan radically limited their engagements with outdoor public spaces as opportunities for creative and expressive physical movement. However, inside the Sport for Youth facility, at particular times of the day, they were free to participate in action sports and to enjoy their physically active bodies as strong, powerful, fast and dynamic. Thus, moving together with other action sport participants, sharing the purposefully built indoor features with momentum, creativity, and joy felt particularly liberating in this context.

While the Sport for Youth facility may offer an escape (for both staff and participants) from the "hectic and messy" world outside the organization, "dressing and acting appropriately by Afghanistan standards" means that the facility was also a highly gendered space, which had implications for the relationships that were accessible to international female staff. Hazel acknowledged there is "a social divide between men and women," such that the male staff (international and local) tended to become very close, as did the women staff (international and local), but interactions across the sexes was limited in their

working, sporting, and social lives. Whereas the women staff were all active action sport participants themselves and enjoyed moving their bodies actively within the Sport for Youth premises, they rarely shared the action sport experience with their male peers. This was quite different to their home countries where urban action sports are often activities involving different genders sharing the same spaces. As a result of the gendered arrangements of the work and leisure spaces in Afghanistan, Hazel reports that the "relationships with the female staff are quite tight; we're really good friends" who have become very good at "supporting each other."

Despite the sense of safety and freedom offered by the Sport for Youth facility, some women spoke of the importance of trying to engage in social interactions outside the Sport for Youth "bubble." For Joanne, interactions with people outside of aid or development work was important for "keeping perspective" and:

> To know where work fits into your life, and to then also keep your head on straight and not get a big head about the work. You see this a lot I think with the expat community… where people think they're pretty important, pretty special, doing something so magnificent. And they are… but so are a lot of the local people. I think it's important to find ways to keep perspective even when you're moving all around and doing something pretty different to what most people are doing.

Whereas Joanne spoke of the value she placed on her almost daily Skype conversations with family or friends to help her "keep perspective," Hazel described her efforts to meet others working in Afghanistan:

> I don't know how many months I spent in Afghanistan, probably 30 or something, and over time, we've had staff change all the time so that's been interesting but it's important to try and meet people outside work because otherwise you totally can drive each other crazy. Occasionally we hang out with other expats that work for NGOs or for the UN or embassies. Sometimes there's barbeques or parties and you meet people, but mostly you're hanging out with each other.

Continuing, however, Hazel acknowledges the difficulties of social interactions outside of their workplace due to "big security regulations": "a lot of people couldn't come to our house because it wasn't secure enough by UN standards or embassy standards." Another noted that the gender relations in some expat leisure spaces were highly problematic, with "middle aged western contractors… drunk at embassy parties," whom she described as "sexually much more inappropriate than any Afghan male!" Here we see how the work–life balance, across public and private spaces, is particularly difficult for international female staff with social

needs and expectations developed from their Western upbringing, but with gendered risks across social spaces. In Afghanistan, they were limited in their potential for social interactions with men in public spaces, within the organization and Aidland more broadly. But, individually and collectively, they found ways to navigate these cultural and gendered power relations as they moved across these spaces, each with different social rules, regulations, and risks.

Embodied Tensions and Reflexivity within and Across Spaces of SDP

In this chapter we have explored the embodied experiences of a small group of international women working in SDP. Using the case study of Sport for Youth, we revealed that during their work, Western women traverse a number of different spaces, and their embodied experiences are not isolated to organizational facilities or those that might typically be considered the spaces of "Aidland." The case study highlights the significance of embodied experiences both inside and outside of organizational facilities – i.e., the streets of Kabul – for how Western women come to (partially) know the places, people, and culture in which they are working.

As Lahiri-Dutt (2017) argues, feminist critical geographers of development need to "expand the space in which we can explore the politics of identity in developmental work" because it is only "once we are able to recognise ourselves in the complex mosaic of identities' that we will be able to 'build coalitions based on mutual understandings of difference" (p. 327). In their calls for researchers and development professionals to develop more self-reflexive practices and rethink "western feminist visions" underpinning their work, many feminist development scholars have recommended drawing upon theory (e.g., postcolonial theory, see Cook, 2005; Cornwall, 2007) or theoretical concepts (i.e., relationality, de Jong, 2017; politics of accountability, Heron, 2007; intersectionality, Lahiri-Dutt, 2017) to facilitate greater reflexivity. While much less guidance is provided to practitioners seeking to unpack the gendered, cultural, and racial assumptions underpinning their everyday work, reflexivity is widely held up as a central tenet to doing "good" feminist development work. Yet feminist scholars working outside of development have raised questions as to how to develop reflexivity, particularly regarding those hard-to-reach "blind spots" (e.g., ethnicity, privilege) in our identities. For some, the body is an important site for facilitating heightened reflexivity (e.g., Metcalfe, 2008; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000; Thorpe, 2009). As our research reveals, for many international women development professionals, the body is an important source of (partial) knowledge and learning, and in some cases, corporeal experiences prompt the types of reflexivity that critical feminist geographers are advocating.

Through their embodied, affective, and sensual experiences within and across work and public spaces in Afghanistan, some of the women in our study came to question assumptions about the intersections of their classed, gendered, sexual, and racial bodies, and their positions of both privilege and liminality within

Afghanistan, and SDP and Aidland more broadly. The following comment is illustrative of the reflexive lines of questioning that were prompted by the embodied tensions experienced within and across spaces:

> There are some very interesting gendered experiences. These raised a lot of questions for me that don't just apply to Afghanistan, but just how I conduct myself in the world in general, respecting different ways of doing things and different cultures, and what is inherently moral and what's culturally moral, and things like that.
>
> (Hazel)

Herein, we see elements of the broader feminist debates focused on "women's rights as universal human rights" versus "feminism-as-imperialism" that the so-called "war on terror" evoked (Kandijoti, 2004, p. 135). In such comments, we also see signs of reflection and concerns about being "white women saving brown women from brown men" (Abu-Lughod, 1998, p. 14; Spivak, 1994). For some of the women, their embodied experiences and observations during their work in Afghanistan prompted questions similar to those raised by Zehfuss (2008) when she asked us to consider: "who do we think we are that we want to change the world?" (p. 612; also see Abu-Lughod, 1998, 2002; de Jong, 2017; Heron, 2007).

Postcolonial feminist approaches "demand that we are able to see, responsibly and respectfully, from another's point of view," while recognizing the power inequalities that produce such differences, and a recognition that such knowledge will always be partial and situated (McEwan, 2001, p. 105). For some of the women in this study, their embodied experiences within and across spaces in Afghanistan (and subsequent conversations with their Afghan female colleagues and friends) offered glimpses into some of the everyday pleasures, struggles and strategies of Afghan women. From a postcolonial feminist perspective, such partial knowledge is an important step toward more ethical encounters with "the Other" (de Jong, 2017; Narayan and Harding, 2000). As the comment below suggests, this partial knowledge prompted some to engage in questions about their own privilege, their difference and relationality to the Afghan women they were working with and for, as well as critical introspection as to their role in a highly problematic development industry:

> Sometimes I feel I should just go home and not come back, because it's like, what right do we have as a western society to go and tell them how to live their lives? It doesn't matter where I come from, what right do I have as a woman to show them what I like, or what I think is a better life?
>
> (Marie)

For some, such embodied experiences and partial knowledge prompted critical reflection on their role and responsibility in (re)producing gender change in Afghanistan, and development work more broadly. For a few of the participants in this study, such reflections prompted them to leave Afghanistan and this line of

work entirely, while others drew upon such experiences and critical ponderings to rethink their relationships and practices in development work in Afghanistan, as well as upon returning "home."

Of course, as Boler (1997), de Jong (2009), and others have cautioned, empathy, reflexivity, and acknowledgment of complicity in the global power relations of development and humanitarianism are not a panacea. For Boler (1997), "passive empathy" – a combination of pity, sympathy, compassion, and fear for oneself – "produces no action towards justice but situates the powerful western eye/I as the judging subject, never called upon to cast her gaze at her own reflection" (p. 259). While the embodied experiences of the women in our study did prompt the turning of the gaze back toward themselves and their problematic positioning in SDP work, it is unlikely that such practices of reflexivity will remedy the structural power inequalities that underpin Aidland. Yet, for many of the women in this project, embodied ways of knowing did inform their efforts to "find ways to operate productively and responsibly within unequal power relations" (de Jong, 2009, p. 399), and to move toward more ethical encounters with 'the Other.' In describing their embodied encounters within and across spaces, the Western women often looked to their Afghan female colleagues for advice and guidance, recognizing and respecting their knowledge and expertise, and thus fostering a mutual accountability.

Final Thoughts

In sum, we concur with de Jong (2009) who calls for more research that "trace[s] empirical examples of the ways people stumble along the ethical route towards reflexivity and constructive complicity, while remaining attentive to the ways structural constraints are negotiated" (p. 400). Furthermore, creating space for women's mundane, everyday embodied experiences in local contexts and across work- and nonwork-specific spaces can provide valuable insight into understandings of difference and relationality in SDP. It also illuminates how power "threads through the everyday praxis" of SDP work in implicit, explicit, tacit, and embodied ways (Partis-Jennings, 2019, p. 180). Ultimately, we hope this chapter highlights some of the many productive synergies between feminist geographies of development and embodiment for offering a window into the complex global and local operations of power that press upon women's bodies in SDP, and how their corporeal experiences may lead to alternative ways of knowing and doing development.

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Chapter 6

Entangled Human and Nonhuman Relations in Sport, Gender and Development

with Lidieth del Socorro Cruz Centeno

In recent years, a number of sport for development and peace scholars have started to depart from "humanist scholarly traditions" by engaging with approaches that explore the human and nonhuman actors involved in producing and shaping the sport for development and peace (SDP) phenomenon and the broader environment in which it operates (Darnell, 2020; Darnell, Giulianotti, Howe, & Collison, 2018; Henne, 2017; McSweeney, Oxford, Spaaij, & Hayhurst, 2020). For example, Darnell (2020) explores the potential of Actor Network Theory (ANT) for "reassembling" the field of SDP. Drawing upon their research with SDP NGOs operating in Kingston, Jamaica, Darnell, Giulianotti, Howe, and Collison (2018) have also suggested that SDP scholars must "begin to move towards a fuller and richer analysis of SDP that would help to show the array of forces and actors (human and non) that influence the organization and deployment of SDP" (p. 97). In a similar vein, Henne (2017) considers the utility of ANT for exploring how actants (both human and nonhuman) contribute to indicator culture in SDP. Her work is helpful for demonstrating that the assemblage of SDP is not merely socially constructed, but is also influenced in a variety of ways by nonhuman actants (e.g., money, technical support and expertise, environmental degradation). Such work elucidates the need for more SDP studies to "de-cente[r], although not de-contextualiz[e], the human body [...] namely by 'flattening' physical cultural contexts so as to consider the associations between active human bodies […] and active non-humans" (Millington & Wilson, 2017, p. 912).

In this chapter, we build on and extend such work by engaging with the generative theoretical contributions of decolonial and postcolonial feminist political ecology (FPE) (Faria & Mollet, 2016; Mollett, 2011, 2017, 2018; Mollett & Faria, 2013, 2018). As we explain in greater detail in the latter half of this

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chapter, ANT approaches – and theoretical work on posthumanisms and new materialisms more broadly – inform scholarship on gender and the environment scholarship in a number of ways. For example, all of these approaches, in one way or another "emphasize the materiality of all the relations between nature and society, while at the same time taking into account their embedding in symbolic orders, interpretive contents, and social constructions," (Hummel & Stieß, 2017, p. 188). Such traditions thus usefully inform a postcolonial feminist and decolonial political ecology, which we contend to be applicable for thinking about how colonialism, racism and patriarchy are "mutually imbued in shaping *human-environmental* relationships" (Mollett & Faria, 2013, p. 117) in the context of SGD.[1] Decolonial feminist approaches might extend such lines of inquiry, for instance, by engaging with aspects of colonial relationships and dismantling the legacy of formal colonialism through ongoing struggles by "intellectuals, artists, activists, academics, and ordinary people to be involved in...sav[ing] their homes, their land, their children, and their own bodies" (Collins, 2019, p. 109). Thus, a decolonial feminist political ecology approach might actively call for the creation of strategies to imagine novel alternatives for "resistance to coloniality, by reverting to or invoking indigenous, emancipatory, restorative or precolonial modes of knowing and being," (Purewal & Loh, 2021, p. 6).

In short – and as we argue throughout this chapter – taking up a decolonial and postcolonial feminist political ecology (FPE) approach helps to better understand how exploring the human-environmental interface in SGD might offer novel ways of (re)considering and (re)conceptualizing the entanglements among SDP, gender-based violence (GBV), sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), environmental sustainability and climate change. In turn, we explore these intersections through participatory action research to better understand the role of the human-environment and the ways human and nonhuman coexist in SGD in the Nicaraguan context. Specifically, we examine how young Nicaraguan women participated in an SGD program used to promote environmental stewardship and "improve" their sexual and reproductive health rights while also striving to prevent gender-based violence. Rather than neatly parsing out different parts of this complex entanglement, we view this chapter as a starting point for investigating different theoretical and conceptual approaches in SGD for understanding the complex human and nonhuman relations that are impacting the lives of girls and women involved in SGD programs across the globe.

We conclude our chapter by suggesting that we must critically account for the broader physical environment, racialized power, new imaginings and formulations embedded in colonial past-presents as human and nonhuman forces continue to shape the experiences of SGD interventions. Indeed, the effects of nonhuman forces on gender relations in the SDP landscape are crucial to consider. This is especially essential to examine in light of the discursive inclusion of gender dimensions and the increased promotion of the participation of young

[1]See Chapter 1 for a more thorough discussion of tensions, challenges and opportunities involved in using *both* decolonial and postcolonial feminist approaches in SGD.

women and girls in broader SDP programming alongside the politics of environmental sustainability, climate change, GBV and SRHR promotion (Women Win, 2019). Such body-land-classed power geometries and politics (see Faria, Katushabe, Kyotowaddle, & Whiteshell, 2020) seem to continue to (re)produce patriarchy by pigeonholing young women and girls as responsible for environmental sustainability efforts; and risk reinforcing traditional hegemonic, "machismo" masculinities (in the case of Nicaragua), gender roles and gendered divisions of labor.

The goal of this chapter is to improve understandings of – and address issues related to – a series of themes, and "trends," that have been touched on in Chapters 1 and 2. The first trend pertains to the increasing "girling of development," whereby girls are being targeted by a suite of development interventions in the interest of achieving positive social change (Hayhurst, 2013). In one sense, this "girling of development" reflects ongoing concerns over health and well-being (e.g., around SRHR) as well as safety and security (e.g., prevention of GBV). According to the UN Women (as cited in Holst, 2013), "one in three women is beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime. The math is simple: One billion women have or will experience gender-based violence" (para. 3). And yet, this "girling of development" also positions girls and women as agents of change, as previously discussed earlier in this book in relation to the Girl Effect campaign.

In turn, the second theme to discuss in this chapter – which has been outlined extensively in Chapter 1 – relates to the role of sport in development, and specifically to the widespread adoption of sport as a tool to support the promotion and pursuit of key gender and development goals through SGD interventions (Saavedra, 2009). For example, according to the UN (2018), "sport can raise awareness and be a platform to share information on sexual and gender-based violence, including in conflict situations" (p. 4).

A third theme we identify pertains to how development work is increasingly reckoning with the climate emergency, especially as the impacts of climate change are particularly severe in Global South contexts. Thus, there has arguably been a *feminization* of environmental responsibility across the globe, such that women and girls in particular, "bear the brunt of environmental, economic and social shocks […] they face greater health and safety risks as water and sanitation systems become compromised; and take on increased domestic and care work as resources dwindle" (UN Women, 2019, para. 2; see also; Kwauk & Braga, 2017). As a result, various organizations have recently developed sport-based programs that attempt to address GBV and SRHR, *and* target women and girls as key agents for fighting environmental degradation. For example, Women Win, one of the largest SGD international NGOs, supports programs in 25 Global South countries using sports such as martial arts as tools to educate girls about: (1) their SRHR; (2) preventing GBV through self-defense focused martial arts activities; and (3) environmental conservation (Women Win, 2019).

While scholars have started to critically examine the intersections of sport, SRHR,GBV (Hayhurst, MacNeill, Kidd, & Knoppers, 2014; van Ingen, 2011), and some SDP researchers are exploring the relationship between sport and environmental sustainability (e.g., Wilson & Millington, 2020), these issues have

largely been siloed off from one another in the literature. That is to say, the relationships between sport/physical activity, development, SRHR and GBV, and environmental change remain unexplored and understudied. This is a crucial elision and not just because these issues and their relationships are being dealt with "on the ground" by organizations such as Nicaraguan Non-Governmental Organization (NNGO) (which will be further contextualized throughout this chapter). They are connected in other ways too. For example, a growing body of literature demonstrates increasing incidences of GBV and SRHR violations associated with environmental degradation (Whittenbury, 2012). Thus, the prevention of violence to the physical environment is deeply enmeshed with preventing violence against bodies. In addition, little remains known as to how various stakeholders understand the ways that the gendered dimensions and politics of environmental degradation might impact how sport is used to promote these same issues (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019). Based on previous studies that directly link environmental violence to GBV (Delisio & Fusco, 2020), it seems clear that ignoring the role of sport, gender and development in addressing/perpetuating violence against humans and nonhumans bespeaks an opportunity for the field: a limitation this chapter aims to shed further light on.

Gender-Based Violence and Sport for Development and Peace

Gender-based violence is defined as violence against people based on their gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender (Women of Gender Equality Canada, 2020). The term gender-based voilence expands "narrow definitions of rape and intimate partner violence to broad conceptions that include sexual slavery during wartime, female genital cutting, sex trafficking, child marriage, and violence while in police custody" (Merry, 2016, p. 44). However, we recognize that using the term "gender-based violence" is fraught with challenges; indeed, vernacularization shapes such conceptual understandings. As discussed in Chapter 1, vernacularization is the process through which concepts that are considered to be homogeneously understood globally end up being reformed in local contexts (Merry, 2016). Certainly, scholars have demonstrated how such reworkings are evident in the SDP realm, where conflations between sport for development/sport development/sport in development and other iterations result in much malleability and conflation when it comes to policy, practice and scholarship (Hayhurst, 2009).

Using SDP to promote gender equality and women's rights seems all-the-more pressing to consider in the context of the emergence of a "syndemic" – the combination of COVID-19 with two other pandemics – racism and GBV, as the GBV pandemic disproportionately impacts racialized women and girls (Khanlou et al., 2020). Previous studies of physical activity for marginalized women and girls who have experienced increased inequity, profound disruption, barriers to participation and vulnerabilities of trauma, suggest that a trauma- and violence-informed practice is beneficial for successful programming (Darroch, Roett, Varcoe, Oliffe, & Montaner, 2020) – an approach that remains to be fully

unpacked and understood in the SDP context, with some exceptions (see Ammann & Matuska, 2014).

In turn, a growing number of SGD programs address health, well-being and safety in order to "empower" young women and girls through curriculum anchored in SRHR promotion in relation and connection to GBV prevention (e.g., Women Win, 2019). While SRHR broadly encompasses issues such as violence against women, it mostly hinges on health issues related to maternal health, mortality, violations of rights and offering accessible physical, sexual, and mental health services for women and girls (Galati, 2015).

SGD programs that use or take up GBV and SRHR continue to proliferate on local, national and global scales by international NGOs. Meanwhile, few scholars have critically examined how such concepts are implemented and understood by participants, practitioners, and policy-makers. Further, researchers have tended to overlook the multiple ways that environmental degradation shapes such understandings. In the Global North context, GBV, sexual and physical abuse have mostly been studied in relation to elite sport programming, but not SGD. For example, a number of studies have focused on physical abuse (Brackenridge, Bringer, & Bishopp, 2005); sexual abuse and harassment of women by athletes and coaches (Fasting Brackenridge, & Sundgot-Borgen, 2003); as well as emotional and psychological abuse (Stirling & Kerr, 2008). Other works based in the Global North context examine how sport participation may expose female athletes to increased instances of sexual violence and harassment (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001). Alternatively, the "protection hypothesis" supports the positive use of sport for women to build their capacity to protect and defend themselves against sexual harassment and abuse by developing self-esteem and physical strength (Fasting, 2005). More recent studies, such as those by Kerr, Barker-Ruchti, Stewart, and Kerr (2020), explore how highly competitive sporting cultures such as gymnastics have produced oppressive and abusive sporting experiences for many girls and women. And yet, few studies have considered these arguments in relation to SGD programs in the Global South context, particularly in relation to the environment.

SDP and the Environment: A Call for Postcolonial and Decolonial Feminist Analyses

For the purposes of our chapter, we define environmental sustainability in terms of mitigating global warming, sustaining resources and protecting ecosystems (Hanson, 2010). In 2005, the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace highlighted the promising use of sport to achieve environmental sustainability (UN, 2018). Indeed, a number of scholars in the realms of sport and physical cultural studies have examined intersections of sport, bodies and the environment in great detail (Bunds & Casper, 2018; Karamichas, 2013; Lenskyj, 1998; McCullough & Kellison, 2017; Rolando Caprio, Rinaldi, & Ellena, 2006; Schaffner, 2009; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006; Wilson & Millington, 2020).

More recently, some sociology of sport and physical cultural scholars are increasingly engaging with more-than-human, posthuman, feminist materialist, and multispecies approaches to explore the complex and vital relationships between human and nonhuman agents with the environment (see Thorpe, Brice, & Clark, 2021; Chapter 7, for an excellent overview of "feminist ethics, the environment and vital respondings"). For example, King and Weedon (2020a, 2020b) have explored the complex relationship between protein power, the environment and human and nonhuman bodies. Evers (2019) has explored human-environment relations among surfers and the ocean. Taking a different approach, Brice and Thorpe (2021) engage with Karen Barad's theory of agential realism to pursue nonanthropocentric understandings of sport-environment and new feminist ethics of everyday fitness lifestyles and objects (Brice & Thorpe, 2021; Thorpe et al., 2021). In so doing, such approaches take up (sometimes duly acknowledged but other times misappropriating) Indigenous ways of knowing the environment as always lively and agentic (see TallBear, 2018; Thomas, 2015; Thorpe et al., 2021). While some of the language and concepts taken up in this chapter touch on the work of feminist materialisms and feminist science studies, we are more focused here on engaging with postcolonial and decolonial feminist ecology approaches that similarly use a "radical approach" to ontology and epistemology that questions "human exceptionalist understandings of being and knowing" (MacGregor, 2017, p. 34).

SDP and the Environment: Beyond Women as Victims of Environmental Destruction

Over recent years, thousands of NGOs and initiatives have emerged across the globe based on the (problematic) premise that sport, recreation and leisure are "positive" tools to address environmental degradation and its impacts (Giuliannotti, 2021; Giuliannotti et al., 2018). And yet, SDP scholarship to date (mirroring, in many ways, environmental scholarship more broadly) largely overlooks the racialized and gendered dimensions of environmental degradation and the potential for sport to address the specific challenges experienced by women and girls. What's more, there remain taken-for-granted heteronormative assumptions and processes threaded throughout (sport) gender and environment work that does not explicitly recognize how both gender justice and climate justice involve, "women and men always in unequal positions that tend to reinforce existing gendered processes" (Arora Jonsson, 2014, p. 301). A key concern here is the ways that women and girls from the Global South are portrayed as victims of climate change impacts:

> Although attention to the gendered impacts of climate change is growing, much of this work focuses on the effects of climate change on impoverished women living in the developing world. Some feminist scholars have been critical of this particular kind of gendered framing because it depicts women, especially nonwhite

> women living in less-developed nations, as primarily victims. Framing women as the impoverished victims of climate change plays into problematic portrayals of those vulnerable to climate change as passive and without agency.
>
> (Moosa & Tuana, 2014, p. 683)

In recent years, more work on gender and the environment has emerged using postcolonial and decolonial lenses that challenge the narrative around women and girls as "victims" of climate change and environmental destruction. Such work elucidates how women are able to resist and negotiate environmental, economic and epistemic dispossession and devastation as well as other forms of "disaster colonialism" and violence (Bonilla, 2020; Mollett, 2017, 2018; Mollett & Faria, 2013).

For example, Rodriguez Castro (2021) brings a notable critique of the coloniality of power and of gender that adopts different conjectural commitments, highlighting the importance of women in the Global South (in her work, rural women in Abya Yala, Columbia). Her work underlines the importance of foregrounding a deep "political commitment to the epistemic forces and relationality of rural places in the Global South, which in Abya Yala are deeply related to territorial struggles that have plural herstories of decolonial body-land resistances to coloniality, extractivism and dispossession" (Rodriguez Castro, 2021, p. 57). Rodriguez Castro's emphasis on the "decolonial body-land resistances" is a critical departure point for the issues we attempt to draw attention to herein.

Ultimately, this chapter is driven by evidence that there are complex and messy relationships between sport and development, colonialism, gender equality, and environmental sustainability that require: (1) attention for their links to inequity and body–land violences and the body as a material and political locus; (2) further and more in-depth exploration in other socio-political contexts; and (3) now, in light of COVID and postpandemic life, attention to variety of (un)anticipated impacts of this global challenge. Too often research separates such topics, artificially pulling apart entangled phenomena. In this chapter, however, we seek to demonstrate the importance of feminist approaches that do not overlook complex relationships, but rather work to follow the overlapping networks, connections and diverse range of human and nonhuman actors, involved in the production of SGD as sociomaterial phenomena.

Gender-Based Violence Prevention, Sexual and Reproductive Health, and the Environment and Sport: An Entangled Relationship

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for UN (1995) defines sexual and reproductive health as, "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes" (p. 35). In turn, SRHR may often include issues such as violence against women, but for the most part

hones in on health issues pertaining to addressing sexually transmitted infections, maternal health and mortality, offering safe and widely available health services for women and girls, HIV testing, sexuality education, how to "say no" to risky sex, and mental health support (Galati, 2015).

Current research in gender and development suggests that notions of population control woven into development projects are often framed as "sexual stewardship" (Sasser, 2017, p. 346). Sexual stewardship tenets are evident in programs and policies put forth in various education and development initiatives that bring together SRHR, GBV, and sustainability practices in an effort to animate women as responsible environmental agents who are expected to successfully control their fertility and reproduction (Sasser, 2017). Increasingly, young women in the Global South are often asked to lower their fertility in the name of "planetary environmental damage" (Murphy, 2017, p. 139). In turn, a number of global SGD NGOs, such as Women Win, actively connect these issues through curriculum and pedagogies used by Global South-based NGOs they partner with, including NNGO (as we further discuss in this chapter). Indeed, Sasser (2017) explains how such connections (among SRHR, GBV, and sustainability) are made through the work of NGOs that end up:

> Discursively link[ing] population growth, environmental problems, and family planning to women's empowerment, they construct a model of an ideal sustainable development subject: a moral agent who manages her fertility and the environment responsibly through contraceptive use for the greater good.
>
> (Sasser, 2017, p. 346)

Put differently, when development interventions that focus on girls and young women prioritize reproduction, fertility, and population control in order to address climate change, more pressing issues rooted in material and structural inequalities end up being overlooked. It stands to reason, though, that young women's agency is still imperative here and they need not be positioned as "eternally vulnerable" and meek victims of climate change. It is thus necessary to recognize that responses to climate change and natural disasters are highly subjective, framed by cultural and gender norms (Bradshaw, 2010); as well as by other forces such as neoliberalism and "disaster colonialism" (Bonilla, 2020; Bonilla & Klein, 2019). Building on Klein's (2007) work on disaster capitalism which shows how natural disasters are not simply "agentless" but deeply embedded in capitalist rationales, "disaster colonialism" explains how "disasters should not be understood as sudden events, but rather the outcome of long histories of slow, structural violence. That 'vulnerability,' both social and environmental, is thus not a natural state but the product of racio-colonial governance" (Bonilla, 2020, p. 1). We would be remiss, then, to paint women and girls as agentless victims of climate change: doing so conceals their agency, voices and resilience, but it also overlooks the broader structural violences of disaster capitalism and colonialism.

Other important postcolonial feminist political ecologists (explained further below) similarly speak to the role of violence in environmental issues by elucidating the ways that public environmental issues are entangled with domestic violence. Examples here explore the interconnections between prescribed gender roles, gendered divisions of labor, social conditioning, and social inequalities as they connect to issues related to public spaces, such as forests (Arora Jonsson, 2014). For example, during Arora Jonsson's (2014) fieldwork with a woman's group in a village in Odisha, India, one woman she interviewed remarked that there was "little point in protecting the forests if [she] could not protect [her]sel[f]" (p. 299).

Postcolonial feminist environmental scholars have similarly suggested that the promotion of SRHR is directly connected to safe and sustainable communities (e.g., SisterSong, 2019). Indeed, some note the concept of reproductive justice as one formed in 1994 by 12 women of color – part of the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective – which they define as "the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children and parent the children we have in *safe and sustainable communities*" [(SisterSong, 2019) as cited by Bobel, 2019, p. 287, italics added for emphasis]. We emphasize here the essential connection to safe and sustainable communities, which implores a need to better understand the ways SRHR might hinge on environmental justice through SGD programming. What's more, young women from the Global South are increasingly being targeted by menstrual hygiene and SRHR programs to ensure their bodies are respectable and dignified before they are deemed "capable" of contributing to the development of their communities and countries, particularly economically or environmentally (Bobel, 2019). Still, little is known about how SGD programs are sutured to notions of population control and sexual stewardship, particularly in relation to SRHR, GBV and environmental sustainability curriculum, which is disconcerting as such SGD programs continue to proliferate at a rapid rate to tackle these very issues.

Overall, then, this chapter seeks to hone in on the unequal power relations, structural inequalities, and the complex gendered, institutional, and intersectional contexts in which environmental degradation, GBV, SRHR, and SGD occur – especially in the current (post-)pandemic moment. Indeed, these are the very entangled matters and knowledge gaps that the study explained herein examines through our empirical work with NNGO. Before doing this, we outline the theoretical underpinnings of this chapter: postcolonial feminist political ecology.

Postcolonial Feminist Political Ecology

For the purposes of this chapter, we draw from postcolonial feminist political ecology and feminist conceptualizations of violence. Taken together, these conceptual lenses help magnify the ways that young Nicaraguan women experience(d) SDP programming, environmental sustainability, GBV, and SRHR in relation to the politics of natural resource control.

The connections among women, gender, and the physical environment have run deep throughout the last four decades. In the early 1970s, ecofeminism emerged alongside broader studies on women, the environment, and development (WED) that were dominant in the late 1980s and early 1990s. WED approaches were mostly informed by practitioner perspectives, initially utilized for better understanding how women are positioned as victims or caretakers of their environments (Resurrección, 2017). The assumed inherent connections between women and development/planning efforts have resulted in them being positioned as being victims, key targets, and caretakers – layered onto their already overtaxed caring roles. Indeed, many have critiqued WED for its homogenizing approach, for essentializing of women's positions by overlooking broader gender roles, gender relations and gender identities (Agarwal, 1992).

Thereafter, the ecofeminism era emerged. Founded by French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne and grounded in the aspirations of women bringing about an ecological revolution (MacGregor, 2017), ecofeminism focuses on teasing apart the relations among environmental sustainability, social justice and gender. In doing so, ecofeminists offer up a knowledge platform that explores the enmeshment between "human and nonhuman, life and nonlife" (Cannella & Manuelito, 2008, p. 53).

Feminist political ecology (FPE) extends ecofeminist perspectives, places gender and power relations at the very center of inequality and the environment, ensuring that we consider the active nature of such relations as they are largely shaped by cultural and societal factors (Resurreccion, 2017). From this standpoint, unequal power relations, especially those engrained in gendered divisions of labor and broader gender inequalities, mitigate and influence the varying access individuals have to control resources at multiple levels (Resurrección, 2017). At its core, then, feminist political ecology is useful for unraveling women's access to resources and strives to uncover why they might have different access than men.

Postcolonial approaches to FPE rework and establish a more complex and nuanced account of the ways that colonialism intersects with racialized and gendered relations of power, acknowledging and yielding more critical analyses of issues related to environmental sustainability, violence to the land and natural resource access (Mollett, 2017). In essence, such approaches have the potential to heighten understandings of how colonialism, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality shape the multifaceted oppressions that – in this case – young Nicaraguan women experience, and are able to, adapt and/or resist climate change and its effects (Gonda, 2017).

In advancing this theorization, using a postcolonial feminist FPE approach highlights how, "using the land for the best interests of industry, profit, settlers, or colonial governments is a central part of colonialism," (Liboiron, 2017, p. 1). Along these lines, as Mollett (2018, p. 178) writes, postcolonial feminist political ecologists might help to:

> Posit postcolonial intersectionality as a way to "trouble gender" or to "mess with gender" – to re-theorize it in such a way that refuses to silence, elide or side-step race but instead to accommodate a

> more complex understanding of the entanglement of racialized and gendered power. This approach demands an acknowledgment of the postcolonial moment of development's interventions in the Global South.

Ecofeminists and feminist political ecologists also see the connections between humans, nonhumans, and the environment – contentions that have been put forth by Indigenous scholars for quite some time (Cannella & Manuelito, 2008). Particularly instructive, here, are the ways that ecofeminist approaches emphasize *relationality*.

Decolonial and Postcolonial Feminist Political Ecology Studies and SDP

We contend that a *decolonial and postcolonial feminist* orientation to political ecology studies (see work by Faria et al., 2020; Mollett, 2017; Resurrección, 2017; Rodriguez Castro, 2021) possibly extends such conceptual orientations by sharpening our theoretical lens to examine the human and nonhuman actants involved in the workings of colonialism, capitalist expansion, consumption and exploitation that continue to shape SGD programs and the SDP phenomena more broadly (see Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno). This approach also conjures attention to the (neo-)colonial effects of such interventions. In short, taking up a postcolonial feminist orientation to political ecology underlines the intricate intersections of colonialism, sexism, and racism in relation to the environment (Mollett, 2017). A decolonial approach emphasizes the coloniality of gender – or the ways that (Western) gender concepts have become normalized and have historically siloed gender (Lugones, 2008, 2010) – upholding the local over the global, engaging with the history of settler colonialism and global gendered racial capitalism (Collins, 2019). Decolonial feminist approaches, as discussed in Chapter 1, tend to go beyond the more abstract theorizing of postcolonial feminist to more action-oriented "resistance knowledge projects" that embrace a more decolonized environmental politics.

SDP, has, for the most part, lacked engagement postcolonial and decolonial feminist political ecology studies to account for the agentic capacities of nonhuman actors as they shape the behaviors and attitudes of those participating in SDP on the ground in diverse contexts and the larger ways that human rights are deployed and taken up (or resisted) by local actors, or targeted beneficiaries. In advancing this theorization, postcolonial feminist political ecology studies may aid understandings of how the environment – including weather, road materials and other nonhuman objects in the rural communities of Nicaragua – ultimately end up shaping the experiences of SGD. A decolonial feminist approach extends this even further, by explicating how we can work more collaboratively and "walking with differently situated others in intersecting, yet distinct and unequally constituted struggles," (Sundberg, 2014, p. 123).

Indeed, decolonial and postcolonial feminist political ecology orientations are highly relevant in order to make the somewhat distant and abstract concepts of

environmental sustainability, GBV and social entrepreneurship more tangible, material, everyday issues. In the next section, we explore the issues outlined above through a case study grounded in the experiences of young women participants involved in an SGD program focused on gender-based violence prevention, sexual and reproductive rights promotion, and environmental stewardship operating in Southern Nicaragua.

Nicaragua: The Women's Movement, Political Foundations, Sport and Climate Change

There is not enough space to outline and properly contextualize the rich history and political foundations of the women's movement, development, sport and the environment in Nicaragua. In this brief section, we therefore provide information on the social, economic, political and cultural landscape of the country in order to contextualize the current state of affairs in the country.

After close to eight centuries of civil war, Spanish colonization commenced – vis-à-vis the Spanish church and state – taking place over a 300-year period mostly characterized by military violence, corruption and Christianization (Disney, 2008). The conquistador was a military industrialist who played an active role in the annihilation of the Indigenous population and the highly oppressive and racialized approach to colonization through a system referred to as *encomienda*. Indeed, this system drove a racial hierarchy whereby the indios – Indigenous peoples of the Americas – were forced to toil on the lands divided by the Spanish colonizers (Lancaster, 1991).

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with 43 percent of the population living in poverty (USAID, 2013). Nicaraguans residing in rural areas (like the area where this research took place) are particularly vulnerable, where the rate of poverty is 63% compared to 43% in urban areas (USAID, 2013). Such challenges pertaining to poverty and inequality are heightened due to a large number of those living in poverty experiencing "climate variability and extreme, often large-scale, weather events," (Radel, Schmook, Carte, & Mardero, 2018, p. 1). Nicaragua's vulnerability to hurricanes, flooding, droughts and other climate change related impacts only exacerbate preexisting inequalities, particularly along lines of gender, race and class.

According to the World Economic Forum (2016), Nicaragua is ranked 10th in the Global Gender Gap Index and fourth in terms of the political participation of women out of 142 countries. And yet, according to Gonda (2017), "the prestigious ranking of Nicaragua in terms of gender equality hides a context in which women's participation in decision-making spaces is not always the result of their empowerment, nor does it contribute to empowerment in the majority of cases" (p. 174). Indeed, a "machismo culture" exists that supports aggressive paternalism and institutionalized male entitlement across Nicaragua. This machismo culture was driven by legislation that has been in place since the 1970s, positioning the authority of men over families and in society (Cobo del Arco, 2000).

The gender order has been sustained and largely driven by the Sandinista Party (or the FSLN) in 2007. Indeed, a number of policies driven by FSLN also position women as the beacons of environmental education anchored by the belief that "women have a natural connection to nature, and therefore that they are especially apt to fight environmental degradation and climate change," (Gonda, 2017, p. 173). In a similar vein to the Girl Effect discourse – which places responsibility on young women in the Global South for development efforts – Nicaraguan women and girls are similarly situated as especially suitable for participating in "productive environmental activities" (Gonda, 2017, p. 177).

These issues are all the more pressing to consider, because the "feminization of nature" discourse that produces Nicaraguan women and girls as agents of environmental responsibility stands in stark contrast to the relative *dis*empowerment they experience in terms of their sexual and reproductive health rights. The FSLN continues to support the criminalization of abortion, which is subject to imprisonment for up to two years, regardless of circumstances. Along these lines, Law 779 (which NNGO has vehemently promoted), opposes and criminalizes violence against women in both private and public spheres, refuses patriarchal values and directly rejects machismo culture (Jubb, 2014). Taken together, the political, environmental, social, and economic experiences of Nicaraguan women outlined above reveal some of the challenges involved in locating safe spaces through which to participate in SGD programming, especially in remote, rural communities mostly predominantly impacted by climate change (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019).

Exploring SGD through Climate Change, Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

Our research with NNGO (the background of this organization explained further in Chapter 2) took place in January 2015. NNGO uses fútbol (soccer) to promote sexual and reproductive health rights, address gender-based violence and navigate the effects of environmental degradation in their community (see Chapter 2 and Hayhurst, 2017 for further details on NNGO's background and our methodological approach). We worked closely with a translator who was well-versed in the local Spanish dialect in this community (further details about the translation process detailed in Hayhurst, 2017). A total of three organizational staff members from NNGO (Staff Member 1, 2, 3) and 11 young women program participants were interviewed, with 18 young women participants participating in photovoice and poster collaging activities (Hayhurst, 2017). Over a three-day period, the young women were asked to capture their experiences of the NNGO's SGD program.

The young women then gathered for a period of two days to create photo-collages – based on their photovoice activities – on bristol boards using text captions, art supplies, and any other materials (e.g., leaves, dirt, and small pebbles) they felt were useful for conveying their experiences in the SGD program. Each poster was created in a pair, with a total of nine posters that were developed.

Hereafter, participants had the option of sharing their posters with the broader group. The final step involved discussing the key themes that emerged from the posters. Key findings were organized into two key categories that were developed: barriers ("barreras," e.g., "violencia" – violence) and enablers ("alientos," e.g., "informacion" – information) (Fig. 1). Lyndsay then used these themes to inform a secondary analysis of the individual photos and collages.

Here, it is important to highlight Lyndsay's positionality as a white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual, cisgender Canadian woman who was able to access connections through her past research relationships with a larger international SGD NGO to form a relationship with del Socorro Cruz Centeno when this study was conducted in 2015. Although Lyndsay has written about this collaboration in more depth in other work (Hayhurst, 2017; also see Chapter 2), she

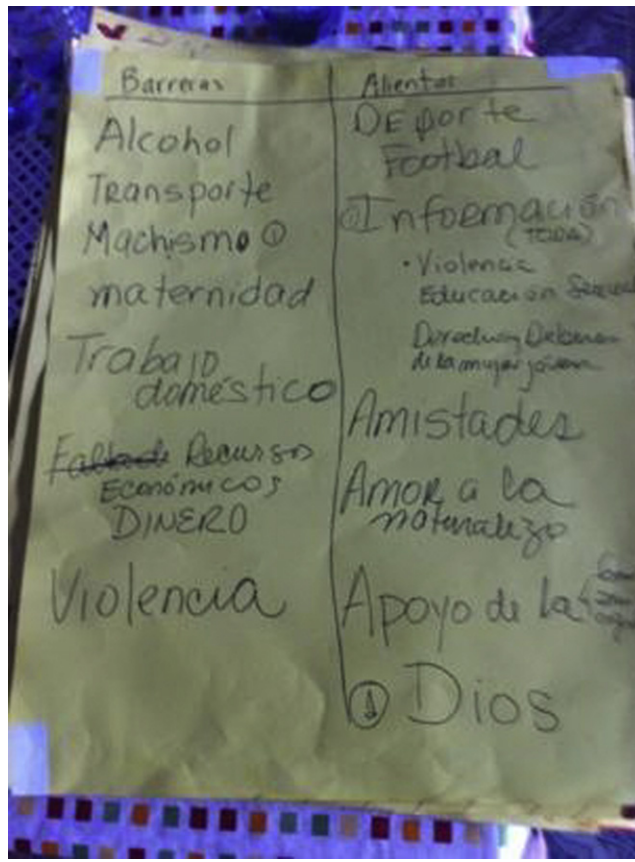

Fig. 1. A Poster describing the Key Themes that Emerged Following Photocollaging Analysis with Young Women Participants (Hayhurst, 2017; Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019).

continues to critically and actively question her positionality and privileges – despite her strong commitment to being a partner in projects of decolonization. Thus, she openly acknowledges the limitations of her own worldviews. Lidieth identifies as a Nicaraguan woman who leads a sport, education and health program for young women and girls and was the lead community-based researcher for fieldwork in Nicaragua discussed herein. Importantly, Lidieth is a long-term partner in this research as it continues into the future.

In the remainder of this chapter, we draw on this empirical work to make three interrelated arguments: 1) SDP researchers must better account for the broader physical environment in social and political life as it shapes the lives of those on the receiving ends of SDP interventions (see Giulianotti, Darnell, Collison, & Howe, 2018); 2) we must go beyond a sole focus on the broader physical environment to also consider the gendered dimensions of environmental issues; and 3) SGD programs may inadvertently contribute to upholding patriarchy, essentialize women's and girls' traditional gender roles, exacerbate gendered divisions of labor, and potentially reinforce assumptions about "women's natural connection to nature" (Gonda, 2017, p. 173).

The Feminization of Environmental Responsibility In/Through SGD

> Through football, we can ensure that we have good practices in relation to the environment, to raise awareness within the community. That we should keep safe and clean the environment […] I'm talking about the environment when the girls are going to play, if they bring in any plastic bag, if they have a water bottle, not to throw it to the floor, but to dispose of their garbage as it should be. And to ensure that the football field is maintained clean, so we have a healthy environment.
> [(Staff Member 2, NNGO) Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 14)]

Throughout the photovoice and photocollaging sessions and interviews, the young women and NNGO staff members (such as Staff Member 2, above) explained how the various spokes of environmental responsibility were threaded throughout the program curriculum. This curriculum employed by NNGO was mostly directed by one of its funders – an international women's rights SGD NGO located in Western Europe that we refer to here as International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO). INGO uses a number of environmental "clean-up games" used to encourage girls to understand "the importance of properly disposing of trash" (Staff Member 2, NNGO). Indeed, games promoted by INGO included one where young women were blindfolded and then taught to place a piece of garbage in the trash can. Following this, they were encouraged to make an environmental commitment.

We are not objecting here to the idea of keeping the environment clean. However, it is clear that these young women are impelled through these activities to be "good global girl citizens" by helping to "save the environment"

without – as Leach (2007, p. 72) contends – "addressing whether they actually had the resources or capacity to do so." Indeed, one cannot help but begin to see that there is an inherent assumption in this curriculum – and in the quote from Staff Member 2 – that girls (and women) are more efficient in executing environmental tasks. Here, the young women were, "given core responsibilities" for maintaining the clean football field and being taught how to properly dispose of trash, based on an assumption about their virtuousness in taking care of nature. The challenge, then, is that the curriculum runs the risk of being grounded in gendered assumptions pertaining to the morality of these young women in taking care of nature, all while potentially overlooking gender relations. These new environmental chores seemed to be added to their already long list of caring roles – as explained further in the next section.

Lauding Women's Environmental Knowledge and Driving Hegemonic Gender Identities

There were a number of cleaning groups that were created as part of NNGO's SGD program. These groups were used to encourage young women to tend to garbage scattered across their community, including empty alcohol bottles that NNGO staff and young women explained were mostly discarded by the men and boys who consumed alcohol while participating and/or watching community football matches. As Julissa stated, when referring to her photo (Fig. 2):

Fig. 2. Photograph by Julissa. Untitled. (See also Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019).

> This is a bottle of liquor. And this is sold at the sports field. It is consumed by the [men] and then they just leave the bottles out there. They leave this out there, so oftentimes you have children, small children that will just pick them up and play with these bottles. In my opinion, I think that you should control these issues. If you're going to sell it, if you're going to sell liquor, then you've got to ensure that the bottles are not left out in the field.
>
> (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 15)

Similarly, and as Hazell noted, while reflecting on her photo of garbage (Fig. 3):

> This photo was taken in front of my house, as you can see. We have cleaning groups. We have four cleaning groups, and if you can see, there is a lot of garbage out there. But what we do is we organize groups to clean, and we collect that garbage, to clean.
>
> (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 15)

Indeed, a number of the young women also described the information provided by NNGO's workshops which were hosted as part of its fútbol festivals and broad curriculum. While topics outlined in such workshops included a focus on environmental issues such as recycling, picking up trash and creating garbage dumps; the workshops also touched on condom use, pregnancy prevention and support for Law 779. The key takeaway point, here, is that information and

Fig. 3. Photograph by Hazell. Untitled. (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 15).

pedagogical practices were being disseminated that were meant to "teach" women about how they might access a variety of opportunities for self-improvement, metamorphic potential and to be the agents capable of, and responsible for, transforming their communities. The young women we spoke to took these tasks seriously and continued to participate in NNGO's workshops despite being criticized by community members. As Maria explained, "community members usually criticize me. They say that we're just looking for men. That we should be at home with our parents. And they just say that we're looking to become pregnant," (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 15).

Similarly, Julissa explained how she navigated such resistance by simply continuing to attend the NNGO's workshops to see how she could learn more about GBV, SRHR, and sustainability practices:

> One of the examples that the information [NNGO] gave us through the workshops and at the different festivals is how to use the condom to prevent pregnancy, and also the sexually transmitted diseases, how to prevent that. Something else is what we can do with the plastic, with garbage. How can we reuse that? We can work, or we can build a garbage dump, or you can sweep it up
> (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 15)

Following our discussion, Julissa highlighted to a photo of the t-shirt she had won for coming in first place in a fútbol tournament. The t-shirt featured the slogan "I use condom always" – and she explained that she was consistently mocked for wearing this item, especially by local boys and men. And yet, Julissa continued to wear the shirt, and committed to cleaning up the alcohol bottles – bolstered by the knowledge NNGO had provided about how such activities may ultimately contribute to incite social change and help to challenge gender norms in the community.

Staff member two further commented on the importance of the young women taking responsibility for the environment for the sake of their health and the health of others:

> For us—we as [NNGO], it is important to create the link, to relate those issues. As a criteria that we had set up in the activities, we don't use disposable dishes or disposable plates or cups because that creates garbage. And oftentimes this is garbage that is not easily recyclable or perhaps is not. So these are issues that are—have a relationship with health, with taking care of us. But also taking care of the environment in which we live. It's part of the living together, the harmonious relationship in which we need to live. It's like a triangle. We, men, environment, it's creating an equal footing. It is the nation among men and women, but also with the environment.

> Creating a balance, an equal footing among those three. We always just try to do that, to preserve the environment.
> (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 16)

This equilibrium was indeed perceived as crucial for the success of NNGO and its related initiatives. Despite this, it was clear – based on the photos and photocollages developed by the young women – that the cleaning groups seemed to negate the very objectives of the SGD program. That is, the goals of the SGD program were to use fútbol (which is masculine dominated sport in Nicaragua) to challenge and disrupt gender norms. NNGO aspired to use fútbol to entice girls to leave their homes. This was because the majority of domestic and sexual violence took place there, in the homes of these young women.

In stark contrast, the single-sex cleaning groups seemed to only reinforce the traditional gender roles by "constructing [cleaning] as an exclusively female chore" and subsequently "reinforce[ing] 'traditional' gender roles that are 'traditional' only in the view of the project" (Gonda, 2017, pp. 181–182). That is, the formation of the cleaning groups potentially perilously reinforces women's fixed roles, where "women's labor and knowledge needs to be used for purposes of sustainability" (Arora Jonsson, 2014, p. 304).

Disrupting the traditional gender roles, prying open safe spaces free of violence and domestic duties – these were many of the aspirations described by the young women who participated in SGD's programs. These issues were explained in great detail by Petrilla in Fig. 4, displaying photos of a tied-up pig

Fig. 4. Photographs by Petrilla. Untitled. (Hayhurst et al., 2018, p. 284).

and a woman as she remains in the home, caring for children, cleaning and cooking (see Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019):

> You see in our pictures that women have dedicated themselves to domestic activities, you see a woman cooking, and a man simply sitting there waiting for the food to be taken to him. And we as [young women] are taught that we need to be mothers. So usually in our communities we see young women who are 14 or 15 years old already pregnant […] Another obstacle, if you see this pig. We know this is a domestic animal, so we are doing domestic chores. But if you can see, the pig is with a rope, tied up. It is as when our parents do not allow us to leave the house, and we are sort of prisoners in our own homes.
>
> (Hayhurst et al., 2018, p. 284)

NNGO was committed to persuading the young women that it was safe to get outside their homes. Certainly, the organization aspired to fight social isolation, deter GBV, and to provide helpful information about how young women could promote and strengthen their SRHR throughout their community. Eight interviewees described how increasingly challenging the lengthening rainy season was, noting that the heavy rains kept them inside their homes for longer periods – making them more susceptible to domestic violence. These heavy rains also moored them to domestic labor obligations. Indeed, ten of the eleven young women explained how they felt overwhelmed and strained by their domestic responsibilities. This was not simply in response to cleaning their homes, communities and care duties for family and friends alike. It was also in response to navigating the challenges of climate change and deforestation, as described in the next section.

Deforestation and Devastation: Navigating the Gendered Implications of Climate Change

Most residents who live in the community where NNGO operated – and in the broader region – are small-scale farmers producing maize, beans, and some vegetables on small plots of land. However, due to the increasing use of herbicides and commercial-led deforestation, the soil and land continues to be severely degraded. A related concern was a lengthening rainy season that tended to contribute to an increased occurrence of natural disasters, including landslides. Thus, a key component of NNGO's SGD program was to use the young women's participation in fútbol activities in order to educate them about the importance of forest preservation. For example – and as seen in Fig. 5 below – the program taught the young women to plant trees and use barriers/blocks made of cement to secure their roads and homes from landslides (see also Figure 1, Chapter 2). These

Fig. 5. Photograph by Maria. Untitled. (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 17).

important features of NNGO's SGD program are explained by Maria in the excerpt below:

Maria: In this picture it reflects the environment. It shows dirt, and then it requires some cleaning. So that's what I'm trying to reflect there.

LH: What do you mean cleaning?

Maria: If you see, when I took the picture I was thinking that we need to clean this area here. You see right here in this area, it has dirt and leaves and no trees here and that there's some cleaning that needs to be done.

LH: Okay, where was this taken?

Maria: This was taken on the street. And this is a cement barrier so water won't go down, it detains leaves. So it's just a stop, and it's a barrier to protect—so there you see the tree is being protected by the stones, by the rocks. And this, you can see them on the roads, so you are not able to walk through those areas. You are not able to go through those areas. So we want to prevent that.

But were these cement barriers enough? It seemed clear that the young women felt their efforts to use such barriers to replace the trees in fighting an increasing rainy season seemed frustratingly pointless, for the landslides continued. Such natural disasters consistently destroyed any roads the young women hoped to use to attend the NNGO's SGD program and run away from the domestic violence they often experienced in their homes.

Navigating the Nonhuman: Gendered Climate Change and Social Isolation in SGD

Photos taken by the young women consistently pointed to the challenges involved in navigating a prolonged rainy season which caused increasing landslides and exposure to other natural disasters. Landslides, for example, often resulted in roads throughout their communities being entirely blocked, preventing the young women from attending the SGD program and fútbol tournaments. A related challenge was that, subsequently, the young women were unable to leave their homes: spaces and places many discussed as violent and risky. And yet, it was unfeasible for NNGO to have to account for the ways that roads, trees, bushes, rocks and cement barriers impacted their ability to (in many ways, ironically), educate participants about gender-based violence prevention, SRHR, and the participants' roles in protecting and sustaining their environments. For example, as Gabriella explained in reference to the challenge of traveling throughout her community (Fig. 6):

Fig. 6. Untitled. Photograph by Gabriella (See also Hayhurst, 2017; Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019).

> I took this picture in my community. One of the difficulties that we face on this road, there is a gorge which is very bad, very deep. And there are difficulties, many of them, because we transport ourselves in a vehicle and the lane is very narrow, so just passing through it is very difficult. And we have to pass through there if we want to play when we go far away.
>
> (Hayhurst et al., 2018, p. 284)

Camilia agreed as she shared her photo of a toy helicopter and teddy bear (Fig. 7):

> This is something that we would never, ever be able to achieve. To fly to some workshop in a helicopter…it would be very difficult. And this is a little bear. I took this picture at my house. That was the way we used to feel, you know, prior to NNGO, it was just like a little bear that was prisoner and it wouldn't go out – couldn't go out. Nobody would visit us and we couldn't get out of the house.
>
> (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 20)

Particularly instructive were Omara's concerns, highlighted by a photo she captured of white tourists driving freely as they explored her community (Fig. 8). Omara juxtaposed the privilege of these tourists, especially due to their ability to travel, in stark contrast with her entrapment and inability to obtain the same opulence:

> Omara: Perhaps I might not be able to buy this car; however, if some time in the future I was able to buy it, it would mean a whole lot for me. It would mean happiness. That's the reason why I liked it, because perhaps I might not be able to buy it, but I can have it in a picture. It's my car (Hayhurst, 2017, p. 13).

Many of the young women interviewed demonstrated an intelligible recognition that their race, gender, and socioeconomic status factored into the disadvantages they navigated on a daily basis. That is, it seemed clear that they were aware of the social (and material constraints) that prevented them from fully "choosing" to achieve gender equality, prevent climate change and realize their SRHR. And yet, participants underscored that they still needed to have a keen understanding of their rights and how their knowledge would be used to prevent GBV and uphold sustainability through their continued participation in NNGO's workshops. For example, as Andrea explained:

> I like to learn about my health and the health of the body. How we as girls take care of your own body. They [NNGO] really give us good training workshops. We do a lot of games. NNGO talks to us about sexuality. They teach us how to prevent diseases, how to ensure that our body's kept clean, what are some of the things that

Fig. 7. Photographs by Camilia. Untitled.

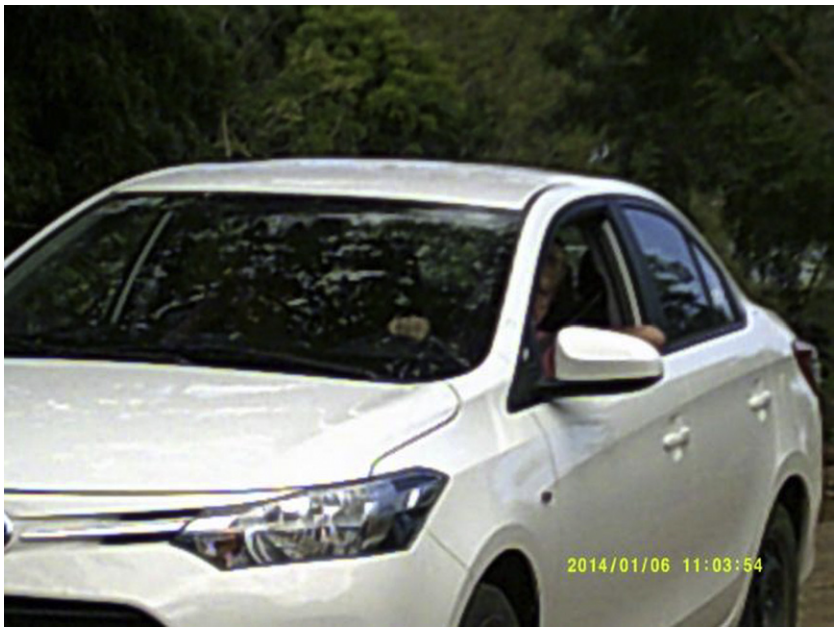

Fig. 8. Photograph by Omara. Untitled. (See also Hayhurst, 2017).

> we need to do, how to prevent diseases. And if we're talking about sexual topics, how to prevent pregnancy, unwanted pregnancies.

However, these young women continued to be the moral bearers of reliability: they were responsible for mitigating climate change and pollution, while simultaneously attending the workshops that were ushering them to clean these same environments, build cement barriers and plant trees to prevent landslides. And still, they strained to attend these workshops as they struggled to steer through a slew of nonhuman factors: deflated bicycle tires punctured by rocky terrain, muddy washed away roads, and defeated tree stumps that once helped to avert devastating landslides.

At the same time, we would be remiss to suggest that these young women did not share "positive" images of their surrounding community during photovoice and photocollaging activities. Indeed, participants shared stunning photos of blooming flowers, tall trees, massive waves crashing on shore on the nearby lake, well-used soccer balls and footprints on a dusty fútbol pitch. Clearly, though, the photos of washed away roads, confined pigs, friendless teddy bears and toy helicopters conveyed a powerful message: that climate change and unsafe home life seemed to contribute to feelings of seclusion and increased exposure to violence.

Final Thoughts, Reflections and Future Directions

> When addressing climate change, women are called on to participate both in decision-making and climate change adaptation because they are seen as the ones who have the best understanding of what should be done. This relates to a typically problematic assumption of the post-feminist discourse: that women, because they are given the possibilities to participate, only need to try hard enough to achieve in this case, both climate change and gender equality.
>
> (Gonda, 2017, p. 179)

The words of Gonda neatly encapsulate one of the central arguments of this chapter: that even with the most well-intentioned policies, programming and laws that are meant to protect women and girls in the realms of GBV, SRHR and climate change, it remains paramount to be attentive and sensitive to context and the infrastructure that upholds these rights (Arora Jonsson, 2014). This contention relates to four other key contributions this chapter has made to decolonial and postcolonial feminist political ecology studies of SDP.

First, we have highlighted how complex racialized, gendered and economic relations intertwine to impel both human and nonhuman elements in shaping SGD programming in unintended ways. We have, secondly, exposed how gendered hierarchies, roles and relations take place and are exacerbated through SGD, especially through the pursuit of neoliberal and colonial development under the semblance of "sustainability." Third, we have demonstrated how the prevention of violence to the physical environment is deeply entangled with the prevention of violence against women's bodies. In some ways, this connects to Rodriguez Castro's (2021, p. 58) recent work on the body-land to draw attention to the importance of using visual participatory action research approaches to "disrupt victim narratives associated with rural women in the global South" by showing how they "resist, negotiate and survive" while also "dismantling the multiple patriarchies embedded in their lives." Fourth and finally, this study pointed to the dangerous ways that "women's knowledge can be harnessed to protect and sustain environments" (Arora Jonsson 2014, p. 304). That is, the young women participating in SGD interventions are all-too-often "tapped on the shoulder" to do the curative labor, while those who are mostly responsible for environmental damages and violence (such as the government, corporations, etc.) are failing to prevent such destruction from taking place to begin with (De Lisio, 2019; Faria et al., 2020; Rodriguez Castro, 2021). For instance, as landslides and flooding continue to heighten the precarity experienced by the young women participants of NNGO, a disaster colonialism lens would ask how "through racial, colonial, and neoliberal regimes of power, Black, Brown, and indigenous bodies are rendered precarious, and are thus more easily exploitable. But crucially, it roots that precarity in centuries long and enduring colonial, global-hemispheric projects," (Faria et al., 2020, p. 89).

In turn, the care work (i.e., women's labor) is used to "save the environment" – with the thought that women are "close to nature," adding to their already (over) extended lists of caring roles. The same rationale is used to justify women's onus for learning about their rights, and for their responsibility to "try harder" to prevent violence and natural disasters like landslides from happening in the first place. And yet, unequal gender relations remain unchallenged. And so, despite the Sandinista government's assertion that *all Nicaraguans* must live in "harmony with Mother Earth" (Gonda, 2017, p. 173), the burden seems to mostly fall on (young) women to locate and maintain such harmony.

Thus, future studies might further explore the multiple ways that SGD/SDP potentially reinforce gendered polarities. In particular, it would be fruitful to critically consider what transpires in terms of gender equality objectives when SGD programs exclusively focus on girls and young women in a given community to achieve environmental sustainability, without failing to account for broader gender relations (for example).

This research has built on, and extended, previous studies that exposed how young women are hailed as responsible for violence prevention and gaining SRHR knowledge. Indeed, the assumption is that their agency and knowledge on GBV prevention and SRHR promotion will be exerted in productive and socially transformative ways. As Ahmed (2017) powerfully cautions:

> Being a girl is a way of being taught what it is to have a body; you are being told; you will receive my advances; you are an object; thing, nothing. To become a girl is to learn to expect such advances; to modify your behaviour in accordance […] Indeed, if you do not modify your behaviour in accordance, if you are not careful and cautious, you can be made responsible for the violence directed toward you.
>
> (p. 26)

Ahmed's warnings need to be considered more deeply in SGD and SDP research. Indeed, it seems crucial to rethink rationales that focus on teaching young women to "modify their behaviors" without addressing the material and structural inequalities that they face. However, it should not be up to NGOs to address such massive inequalities: these issues often fall outside the realm of their mandates.

Finally, our findings contribute to other feminist development studies that explore menstrual hygiene management (Bobel, 2019), feminist reproductive politics (Murphy, 2017) and the logic of vulnerability that permeates the discourses of gender and development programs more broadly (Shepherd, 2017). Overall, what this literature helps explain is that in dominant development discourse, women (young women in particular) are typically first positioned as "vulnerable victims" before they may be empowered – especially economically (Arora Jonsson 2014). Indeed, decolonial and postcolonial feminist political

ecology perspectives present a useful starting point to challenge such approaches and "get at" the complex material-discursive, human and nonhuman entanglements affecting SGD, and the experiences of girls and women involved in such programs. Such an approach thus "offer[s] possibilities for change through critical, disruptive and decentering engagements with the mutual constitution of race, gender, sexuality and space," (Mollett, 2017, p. 13). Taken together, we must strive to better understand the material violence of climate change and the gender-based violence so often created in its fallout.

Chapter 7

The Ethics of Visibilities: Sport for Development Media Portrayals of Girls and Women

An array of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) programs focused on girls and young women are utilizing social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Twitter) and digital technologies (i.e., websites, YouTube) to garner international attention and raise funds for their initiatives. In the context of the "Girl Effect" in development, we are increasingly seeing girls and young women from the Global South in action – playing soccer, climbing walls, riding skateboards, and engaging in an array of other sports. While such visual representations suggest a positive move away from what some have termed "poverty porn" that tends to victimize those from the Global South, in this chapter we argue for a need for more nuanced critical understanding of the power relations and ethics involved in the representation of girls and women from the Global South (Cornwall, 2016; Wilson, 2011). Located at the intersection of postfeminist, neoliberal and post-humanitarian discourses, many such representations are culturally complex, inspiring and/or intriguing to audiences in the Global North and thus are highly effective in garnering the attention of potential donors. In many cases, however, such images are essentially presenting "brown girls" as the "exotic other[s]" (Said, 1978) for the consumption of audiences from the Global North.

As Sensoy and Marshall (2010) suggest, if we view such initiatives and representations as "a political text mired in its social context and tied to historically bound colonial discourses and material power relations, then we can ask a different set of questions": around whom do such organizations represent and "how far the right to represent extends"? (p. 309). According to Sensoy and Marshall (2010), media portrayals of girls and women in such programs demand a "close[r] examination of who represents whom, for what purposes and with what results" (p. 309).

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Such considerations were, for example, critical in our processes of selecting an image for the cover of this book. Careful to avoid putting a young woman at unnecessary risk, while also trying to evoke the dynamism and potential in SGD, we chose an image that does not reveal the face of the girl skateboarder. As some have pointed out, audiences connect much more with the highly affective (and affecting) smiling faces of girls in SDP programs, and yet the safety of girls and women must be prioritized over any other potentially beneficial by-products of such imagery. This is more important than ever as the gendered risks of such imagery are dynamic and context-specific. As this book went into production, Afghanistan was moving into an increasingly volatile and uncertain period with US troops departing and the Taliban gaining strength (also see Chapter 4). The gendered risks have thus changed and will continue to change, since the image was initially taken, and when it was selected for the cover of this book. Responding to the changing conditions in Afghanistan, in the final stages of production, we asked for a more graphically modified cover image so as to remove any possible risks of identification of the young woman, the program, or the location. All SDP organizations, and those of us writing about and representing such programs, must always take a risk-averse approach that takes into consideration the local context, as well as the potential for interpretations and realities of such gendered risks to change quickly.

In this chapter we build upon our previous work to further explore the ethics of representing girls and women from the Global South in SDP organizational communication campaigns (Thorpe, Chawansky, & Hayhurst, 2018, 2019). First, we draw upon humanitarian communication and postfeminist literature to explore the political and ethical considerations involved in representing girls and women from the developing world in SDP campaigns. In the latter part of the chapter we draw upon the case of Sport for Youth* (pseudonym) – an international SDP organization with action sport and educational programs in Afghanistan, as well as Asian and African countries – focusing particularly on Sport for Youth's social media representations of girls and young women doing action sports in Afghanistan. Drawing upon interviews with local Afghan and international staff members involved in producing online communication campaigns, the chapter reveals some of the nuanced power relations within such media portrayals. In so doing, we also draw attention to some of the unintended consequences of "positive" representations of sporting girls from the Global South, and some of the strategies employed by Sport for Youth to navigate such issues and minimize risk to staff and students. We begin by contextualizing this case within the broader literature relating to recent shifts in humanitarian communication strategies, with a particular focus on representations of girls and young women from the Global South.

Humanitarian Communication, the Girl Effect and the Ethics of Representation

Over the past decade, there has been a growing interest in studying the communication strategies and a esthetic properties of humanitarian and development campaigns (Koffman & Gill, 2013; Shain, 2013; Switzer, 2013; Wilson,

2015). According to Dogra (2007), the representations of humanitarian agencies, social movements, and community organizations, including visual imagery, are worthy of deeper critical consideration precisely because they "influence policies, practices and discourses of 'development' and connect cultures globally" (p. 161). Continuing, however, she notes that the images NGOs choose to project are "not based on unmediated or 'free' choices":

> For instance, there are limitations of charity laws, tug of multiple stakeholders, specific "organizational subjectivity," and the very nature of visual images and their myriad interpretations. However there is still a choice which is deliberately exercised by the NGO when it selects one image over another and uses it publicly.
>
> (Dogra, 2007, p. 170)

Hall (1993) reminds us that images can be decoded in a variety of ways and such readings are often informed by one's life experiences. While "oppositional" readings are always possible, NGOs tend to use images with a "preferred," "dominant" or "hegemonic" reading intended by the organization (Dogra, 2007, p. 163). While much of the existing humanitarian communication literature focuses on the strategies being employed by organizations and the "preferred" (and often assumed) readings of audiences from the Global North, it is also imperative to consider how the images and narratives may potentially act as a "space where those dominant representations can be challenged and contested" (Cameron & Hannstra, 2008, p. 1476) within organizations and/or by local and international audiences. In this chapter, we make a case for feminist researchers of SDP to critically consider organizations' visual representations of girls and women from the Global South, recognizing that the visual materials produced by NGOs are always implicated in complex relationships between "representation, knowledge, and power" (Wilson, 2011, p. 319). Moreover, representations of the female sporting "Other" involve a number of ethical considerations, which demand critical exploration from those producing, consuming, and researching such imagery.

From "Poor and Powerless" to "Positive" Portrayals of Girls from the Global South

Humanitarian communication styles and strategies have undergone considerable change over the past four decades. Often termed "poverty porn," victim-orientated representations have been critiqued for "constructing a public image in the North of 'others' in the South as passive, helpless and sub-human victims," thus decontextualizing their suffering, removing their agency, and reinforcing "already widespread perceptions of cultural and intellectual superiority among Northern publics, as well as the belief that benevolent donors in the North are the primary source of solutions of the 'problems' of the South" (Cameron & Haanstra, 2008, p. 1478). In her critique of such visual strategies, Chouliaraki (2010) described these campaigns focusing on "the distant sufferer as the object

of our contemplation," and in so doing, establishing a "social relationship anchored on the colonial gaze and premised on maximal distance between spectator and suffering" (p. 110; Hall, 2001/1992). Focusing particularly on the gender politics of such representations, Win (2007) writes that the development industry promoted a rather trite depiction of the "Global South girl," constructing her as "always poor, powerless and invariably pregnant, burdened with lots of children, or carrying one load or another on her head" (p. 79).

In response to widespread critique of the racist imperialism underpinning such campaigns, many humanitarian organizations and NGOs set out to deliberately represent the Global South through positive images of "self-reliant and active people, or at least to avoid using images that depicted people in the South as completely helpless victims" (Cameron & Haanstra, 2008, p. 1478). A key difference between "negative" and "positive" campaigns is that the latter reject the imagery of the sufferer as a victim, focusing instead on their agency and dignity (Chouliaraki, 2010). While positive imagery may appear to "avoid the ethical problems associated with pornographic representations of poverty" (Cameron & Haanstra, 2008, p. 1485), it is far from being unproblematic. According to Dogra (2007), such positive imagery remains a "lazy way out," suggesting it is time to question the purpose of "positive" imagery:

> Does an idealized "happy" image show the achievements of the INGO thereby representing a post-intervention scenario? Is it just the safest way out of the strong criticism of "negative" imagery? Or is the trend of "positive" imagery merely in tune with some currently acceptable marketing studies that indicate that appeals sent to potential donors with a "positive" image fetch more donations compared to the ones with "negative" images? (p. 168).

For Chouliaraki (2010), criticism against "positive image" appeals focuses precisely on this "ambivalent moral agency that their imagery makes possible" (p. 113). Chouliaraki (2010) has made a particularly valuable contribution to our understandings of these changes in humanitarian communication styles, moving beyond the simple dichotomy of "negative" and "positive" campaigns and focusing instead on a more nuanced discussion that "move(s) from emotion-oriented to post-humanitarian styles of appealing that tend to privilege low-intensity emotions and short-term forms of agency" (p. 108). Others have asked similarly critical questions about the development industry's neoliberalization of agency and choice (Wilson, 2015). In this context, we also need to pose questions as to the ethics of representation, in particular who is producing representations of those from the Global South and for what purposes, and who are the "owners" of these images? And who benefits from such imagery?

For many, the turn toward so-called "positive" representations of girls from the Global South may seem an improvement. Yet, a growing number of feminist scholars are arguing that this new positive imagery paradigm is "fraught with tensions and unintended consequences" (Koffman, Orgad, & Gill, 2015, p. 159; Calkin, 2015; Wilson, 2011, 2015). In particular, Wilson (2011) examines the

"specific and gendered ways" in which "more recent visual productions are racialised," exploring, in particular, "parallels and continuities between colonial representations of women workers and today's images of micro-entrepreneurship within the framework of neoliberal globalisation" (p. 315). Others have located such trends at the intersection of neoliberalism and postfeminist discourses (of female empowerment and girl power), arguing that the "girl" in these visual representations is in fact always understood in relation to, and in contrast with, her already empowered Northern counterpart (Calkin, 2015; Koffman & Gill, 2013; Switzer, 2013; Wilson, 2015). For example, Switzer (2013) draws upon the work of postfeminist media scholars such as McRobbie (2009) and Gill and Scharff (2011) to present a "(post)feminist development fable of adolescent female exceptionalism seeded in representations of young female sexual embodiment" that has come to "define expert and popular knowledge about the inter-dynamics of girls' education, gendered social change, and economic growth" (p. 350). In so doing, the Girl Effect has become a "regulatory representational regime" that works to reinforce binaries between empowered girls and women in the Global North and those needing their help in the Global South, explicitly racializing, depoliticizing, ahistoricizing, and naturalizing global structural inequities and legitimizing neoliberal interventions, all "in the name of girls' empowerment" (Switzer, 2013, p. 347).

Similarly, for Koffman et al. (2015), the new and intensified focus upon the figure of the girl in global humanitarian and development communications is revealing of a "distinctive, neocolonial, neoliberal and postfeminist articulation of girl power" (p. 157). They argue that the rise in postfeminist discourses and the turn toward posthumanitarian communication styles that move away from emotion-oriented campaigns to the privileging of low-intensity emotions and short-term forms of agency (Chouliaraki, 2010; also see Calkin, 2015) have "come together in the emerging 'girl powering' of humanitarian discourses – a cocktail of celebratory 'girlafestoes' and 'empowerment strategies' often spread virally via social media, celebrity endorsements, and corporate branding" (p. 158).

Koffman et al. (2015) and Wilson (2011) both locate the rise in "positive" representations of girls and women from the Global South within the "depoliticization, corporatization, and neoliberalization of humanitarian communications" (Koffman et al., 2015, p. 158). In turn, Wilson (2011) offers a particularly insightful examination of the consequences of such representations. According to Wilson (2011), contemporary "positive" visual representations of girls and young women in the Global South produced by development institutions and NGOs are "rooted in a notion of 'agency' consistent with – and necessary for – neoliberal capitalism" (p. 328). Rather than challenging the racialized and gendered power relationships inherent in development, this focus on the agency of girls (of both the Global South and Global North) works to shift "attention away from both material structures of power and gendered ideologies" (Wilson, 2011, p. 317):

> … agency, like empowerment, is projected as a gift to be granted by the consumer of the images – and potential donor – implicitly reaffirming the civilising mission. Thus the notion of victims to be

> saved, which these images supposedly challenge, is not in fact eradicated but reworked. … Like their colonial predecessors, today's images work to silence or obscure multiple forms of resistance to contemporary imperialism.
>
> (Wilson, 2011, p. 329)

In this chapter we call for greater consideration of how SDP organizations may similarly be "reworking" historical victim-based representations of girls and young women from the Global South for the purposes of raising funds from the Global North. Wilson (2011) asks a series of questions that we feel are pertinent to analyses of SDP representations of athletic girls and young women from the Global South, particularly: "What desires – licit and illicit – are being produced within the consumer of 'positive images' of women in the Global South?" (p. 320); "What are the implications of the kinds of 'positive' images of women which are produced?" and "In what ways are these images gendered and racialised?" (p. 322). Despite the increasing visibility of sporting girls and young women from the Global South, greater consideration needs to be given to the ethics of such representations or the (unintended) risks of so-called "positive" portrayals. In the following section, we suggest that such oversights may be influenced by the tendency for feminist sport media research to focus largely on sportswomen (and audiences) from the Global North.

SDP, Feminist Sports Media and Representations of the Global South

Various scholars have examined the communication strategies employed by SDP NGOs, with a particular focus on the growing prevalence of digital campaigns. For example, research has revealed how the Internet enables sport-related NGOs by attracting funding and donor support (Hambrick & Svensson, 2015; Svensson, Mahoney, & Hambrick, 2015; Wilson & Hayhurst, 2009) and supporting collaboration and competition among organizations (Hayhurst, Wilson, & Frisby, 2011). To date, few have focused specifically on representations of girls and young women in such campaigns. However, McDonald (2015) has observed the increasing "positive" representations of girls and young women in SDP programs in the Global South, noting that "most of the program images feature women in physical activity positions, or engaging with fellow participants and friends" and thus "stand in stark contrast to some poverty reduction campaigns that show the devastation that poverty ravages on the human body in order to play upon sympathies from potential donors and corporate sponsors" (p. 10). Some NGOs are also providing local staff and participants with opportunities to create their own images and narratives. As we suggest later in this chapter, even with the best intentions, such efforts are often underpinned with Global North/South power relations.

For some scholars and practitioners from the Global North, it might be assumed that representations of active girls and young women from the Global South that focus on their physical abilities and sporting achievements signify a

positive trend in media portrayals. Here, however, we argue for the importance of rethinking some of the assumptions that have become hegemonic in feminist readings of media portrayals of sportswomen in the Global North. For over two decades, feminist sport sociologists have engaged in extensive media analyses of female athletes in the Global North, identifying the various ways their participation is marginalized, trivialized and (hetero)sexualized (see Bruce, 2015, for an overview of this research). In so doing, they have argued strongly for increased quantity and better quality of representations of sportswomen in media. Critically reflecting on this call for better "quality" of media coverage for sportswomen, Toffoletti (2016) suggests a need for expanding the conceptual boundaries by including sensibilities of postfeminism (Gill, 2007). In this call, Toffoletti (2016) works to disrupt the current understandings about what quality media coverage of sportswomen is, but she does so primarily with a Global North sportswoman in mind. Indeed, we would suggest that most of the academic literature on media representations of sportswomen fails to consider the needs and context of athletic girls and women from the Global South. Not surprisingly then, Samie and Sehlikoglu's (2015) analysis of Western (France, US, Canada and Australia) media coverage of Muslim female athletes who competed in London 2012 found that coverage consistently presented them as "strange, incompetent, and out of place."

While we do not wish to conflate Muslim female athletes and athletes from the Global South, what we do seek to highlight is that increased coverage of physically active girls and women from the Global South does not necessarily lead to improved opportunities to participate in sport and social life. Such arguments challenge dominant assumptions that increased coverage is unquestionably positive for sportswomen and girls. Even content produced by local girls and women and then used by the NGO for their own purposes must be questioned. For, despite our observations of a steady growth in so-called "positive" representations of girls and women participating in sport in the Global South, there has been little focused attention on the ways the physically active Global South girls are being represented by SDP organizations and related media outlets. As we argue, the power and politics of representation are also highly place-specific, and thus NGOs should give careful consideration not only to their international audiences but also to the local and national contexts from which representations are created.

The Politics, Ethics and Risks of Representing Girls in SDP

In the remainder of this chapter we build upon the case of Sport for Youth as presented in Chapters 4 and 5, focusing specifically on Sport for Youth's marketing and communication strategies, particularly as they relate to their usage of social media and representations of Afghan girls. This discussion draws upon interviews conducted (in-person and via Skype) by Thorpe between 2011 and 2016 with 11 Sport for Youth staff, including 9 international staff (of recent past and present) and 2 Afghan staff involved in the communication and marketing strategies of Sport for Youth. While these interviews were part of a larger project led by Thorpe, a key line of questioning was their role in the documentation and

production of imagery associated with Sport for Youth over the past 10 years and their understanding of the issues associated with representing Afghan girls in such materials. Interviewees included seven women and four men (pseudonyms will be used throughout) who had held a variety of roles within the NGO, including paid and volunteer positions ranging from Communications Manager to multimedia coordinating assistant, and thus the interviews offered a wide array of perspectives and critical understandings of such processes. In the remainder of this chapter, we engage with recent feminist humanitarian communication scholarship to critically contextualize the insights offered from interviews to consider how Sport for Youth's strategies are informed by broader trends in posthumanitarian communication and postfeminist culture. Although not the focus of this chapter, longitudinal digital observations of Sport for Youth's use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, organizational website and blog) also informed the interview schedules and facilitated the broader analysis.

Working at the intersection between action sport media and NGO communications, Sport for Youth is very proactive and efficient in their use of social media. Since the early days of the organization, Sport for Youth has invested in a well-designed website featuring regular updates, videos, photos and a variety of other media content. During an interview in 2011, the founder acknowledged that the Sport for Youth website has always been an important tool for garnering global support and recognition: "Even when the organization was very very basic … there was the [Sport for Youth] website that had photos on there that connected with people." Continuing, he described the ability to "document and share" their work in Kabul with a global audience via the website and other visual media as "just as important as the activities [on the ground] … because not everybody can come and see with their own two eyes what we were doing." In the contemporary context, social media campaigns play a key role in Sport for Youth's fundraising efforts such that there are two full-time communications staff at their headquarters in Berlin dedicated to producing and disseminating content via their organizational website and blog, and Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook profiles, with at least one local staff member at each of their sites focused on the role of communications and content production. Content from the local sites is sent to the HQ where images and text are ultimately selected, edited and posted by the Communication Manager. Sport for Youth has also partnered with various media producers to create online campaigns, short digital videos, and documentaries. Some of these have received international acclaim, including a short documentary that won a series of international film awards in 2020. Such media products have been highly successful in garnering audiences from the Global North, with the positive portrayals of Afghan girls doing action sports playing a central role.

Beyond Poverty Porn: "We don't Use Images of Our Students Looking Tragic"

Sport for Youth's media campaigns are firmly located in the recent turn to positive humanitarian communication strategies. Sport for Youth iconography has

been particularly dominated by images of Afghan girls in headscarves and traditional clothing doing action sports. As Amanda, an international female staff member, notes: "we definitely do focus on the Afghan girls – they're [doing action sports], they're empowered, they're excited." Another senior communications staff, suggested that despite their programs catering for boys and girls, the organizational communications continue to be "a bit heavier on the female content because we'll get more off it", thus suggesting an explicit market awareness and the "effectiveness" of such images in a saturated humanitarian mediascape.

Both international and local Sport for Youth staff interviewed for this project were largely attuned to stereotypical representations used in development work that potentially "produce and sustain knowledge of the helpless cultural Other" (Darnell, 2010, p. 399). They challenged commonly held views of Afghan girls and women as victims, instead focusing on their potential for culturally specific forms of agency and reappropriation of action sports such that they have meaning in their own lives (see Thorpe & Chawansky, 2016). For example, Tracey (international staff) acknowledged the limits of commonly held Western views of Afghan girls sporting participation: "In fact, for many of them, their community is actually quite supportive, and their families can be very supportive too, particularly for our local female staff who are bringing in an income from their sporting activity." Interestingly, another international female staff member, Emily, explained how Afghan girls participating in action sports are demonstrating agency by "making [these sports] their own": "For them, [action sport] represents opportunity, fun and an ability to imagine a different future for themselves and others. It has nothing to do with the Western associations with [action sport] to do-it-yourself or anti-authoritarianism." The founder also expressed caution of treating Sport for Youth participants as victims: "We encourage girls, we put more resources into getting girls into our programs, but we don't talk about them needing special attention or special treatment. This could lead them to think they are somehow victims." Such an understanding and respect for Afghan girls' everyday agency is also implicit in their media representations and marketing efforts. As one of the leaders in the international communication team (Renee) states, "We are always focusing on portraying things positively, putting the kids first and their voices first," with Andrea adding:

> One of the most important policies around the media we produce is that we… don't want to use any images of our students looking tragic. We don't want to exploit them and make you [the reader] feel sorry for them to try to generate interest or revenue, which is what a lot of organisations do.

Similarly, Tina (international staff) noted that "[Sport for Youth] has guidelines for social media and media in general," such that "we're always focusing on the positive aspects and never doing poverty porn style photographs."

Sport for Youth clearly demonstrates a critical awareness of some of the market-driven and ethical considerations informing such photographs. It is the

intersection of the ethical and market-driven considerations informing such photographs – who takes them and for what purposes; how such images are "read" by whom and with what effects – that we focus on in the subsequent parts of this chapter. In so doing, we are particularly interested in the ethical issues and power relations involved in social media portrayals of Afghan girls doing action sports in a context of neoliberalism and the increasing corporatization and branding of sporting NGOs.

The Power and Politics of Imagery of Afghan Girls Doing Action Sports

Since the early campaigns of Sport for Youth, imagery of young Afghan girls doing action sports has captured the imagination of audiences around the world. This was further reinforced by journalists who also sought out this particular angle in their stories: "the media requests that [Sport for Youth] gets are really focused on the female element though this is only one part of what we do with our programs" (Amanda). While the public and media fascination with Afghan girls doing action sports may make the telling of "other" organizational stories more difficult, Amanda acknowledges that Sport for Youth is explicitly aware of the marketing potential of such imagery: "We use the Afghan girl [action sport participants] as a hook to get the attention at [Sport for Youth] and then we try to communicate about the boys, and our programs in [Asia and Africa]. So, yeah, it's now become a hook … but that's marketing!" As this comment suggests, Sport for Youth used the unique case of Afghan girl action sport participants as a promising "poster" to represent all of their Global South projects, but there was a growing awareness among the media and marketing managers at the HQ that this may have been homogenizing their experiences, such that they were working to present more diverse representations (e.g., more images and stories of Afghan boys, and students and staff at the Cambodia and South African sites) even if they do not ignite the public imagination in quite the same way.

Recognizing the potency of Sport for Youth's images of Afghan girl action sport participants in the contemporary moment, the United Nations featured an image of three female Sport for Youth students standing on the top of a mini-ramp with arms folded, gazing with confidence at the camera, as part of the 2015 #sharehumanity campaign. While Sport for Youth acknowledges and embraces the "power of these images," Amanda notes some organizational concerns when their images are used in such global campaigns: "It's so powerful and it's used down the line by millions of people, but by then it's lost its caption and sometimes its context. … we can't control who and why people are talking about these images…. And it's really important to not lose that messaging and not for it to be used in a negative sense." The relation between NGOs and media is often compared to a "double-edged sword" (Dogra, 2007, p. 163). While NGOs do need additional media coverage for publicity, fundraising, and heightening their public profile, there is always the concern that media will sensationalize and oversimplify complex issues thereby loosening the NGOs' "control over the terms of public representation" (Deacon, 1999, p. 57). Such concerns seem particularly

pertinent in the digital age where widespread image distribution can happen very rapidly with images being shared, interpreted, and reappropriated well beyond the realm of organizational control. In the era of Web 2.0, the power to represent the "Other" is further implicated in many layers of global and local politics, with possible (unintended) consequences for both the NGOs and those being represented in such campaigns.

It is also important to consider what makes these images (and associated media products, including documentaries and short videos) so powerful at this particular historical conjuncture. Arguably, these images sit at the intersection of hegemonic discourses of (1) Afghanistan as a site of ongoing conflict and female oppression; (2) action sports as activities dominated for many years by young, white men (see Beal, 1996); and (3) the rise of the Girl Effect and postfeminist media culture. The following comments from Amanda are insightful of this broader context within which such imagery have found traction:

> These images [of Afghan girls doing action sports] were challenging so many stereotypes all in one. They're challenging the stereotype of the negativity towards Afghanistan, and towards a female's place in society there. But also from [an action sports] perspective… in western culture, often [action sports] are seen as a thing just for men… There are just so many double negatives going on [in these images]. Also, I think with so much going on in the news about Afghanistan that's negative, to see these positive images, which are so rare and for it to be something that is not expected of Afghan girls, it's very inspiring.

For decades, media from the Global North has repeatedly stressed the oppressive, patriarchal culture of Afghanistan (see Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003). Working to connect with audiences in the Global North in an Afghanistan saturated media context, Sport for Youth has been able to largely avoid commenting on the conditions in Afghanistan, instead presenting "positive" portrayals of Afghan girls while audiences in the Global North themselves fill in the background based on their own (often misunderstood or stereotypical) understandings of the lives of girls and women in Afghanistan. As an international female staff member commented:

> I think those images of Afghan girls really challenge people's expectations of what an Afghan girl likes to do. You don't have to post a picture of someone sitting on the street looking down and out because people have this assumption in their head that that's what it is to be an Afghan woman. So when we have these images of them not just doing a sport or studying but also doing a sport that's traditionally very male dominated [in the global North], I think it really hits people because it's two things they never thought they would see together (Janet).

As the comments above suggest, it is the juxtaposition of stereotypes of two seemingly radically different cultural codes – women in Afghanistan and women in action sports – that seems to be so compelling to audiences in the Global North.

While this chapter does not focus empirically on the reactions of Global North audiences to these images, the digital observations of each of Sport for Youth's social media accounts reveal widespread (largely uncritical) celebration of images of Afghan girls doing action sports, particularly among young women and action sport participants. Observing the power of imagery associated with the Girl Effect, Koffman, Orgad, and Gill (2015) note that "the contrast between girls powerlessness and their potential is highlighted and used as a rhetorical device across policy documents, campaign materials, and media texts" (p. 16). Indeed, it is this "dual construction" of the Afghan action sports girl as "victim and agent of potential" that works so effectively as a rhetorical device for Sport for Youth: she is "at once a victim of oppressive patriarchal culture and a courageous, resilient agent refusing to be silenced, embodying the feisty, girl-power inflected mode of (post)feminist (post) humanitarianism" (Koffman et al., 2015, p. 161).

Other broader contextual factors also inform how audiences from the Global North are typically reading such images, including the current trendiness of action sports and the rise in visibility of "girl power." Amanda suggests the timeliness of such images in a global context where action sports are increasingly fashionable, and how Afghan girls action sports participation in their own culturally specific attire offers a set of intriguing images:

> …[action sports are] on trend, it's a fashion element as well isn't it? And when it is on trend, it's just going to pick up more and more exposure on this side of the world. They're like "wow, these girls are doing something that's so trendy on the streets of London, so trendy in LA, but they're doing it their own way as well." They're wearing their authentic dress and they don't necessarily have to have all the best equipment or the best shoes, and they're… making it their own, basically, which is inspiring.

Continuing, she inadvertently acknowledges the rise of the Girl Effect and postfeminist discourses in the Global North as further informing how imagery of Afghan girls doing action sports are being received:

> The visuals from Afghanistan and the girls [doing action sports] and the story there, it was so strong. I think it's this day and age as well. The past five years you can see the female empowerment element really rising. … I think within non-profits it's a very powerful area to be in. But also, just in day-to-day life; you know, life in the UK for a girl or America for a girl, it's really improved in terms of how society is representing female culture.

In the context of the Girl Effect and neoliberal approaches to development, many girls and women (and men) in the Global North are reading images of

Afghan girls doing action sports as "very inspiring" and prompting many to support via "likes," "shares," heart and applause emojis, and one-off or longer term donations (e.g., "Love that there are projects like this for girls. It has more impact in the world than many think I guess. How can one support it?", comment on the Sport for Youth Facebook page, 2018). Yet such representations are not necessarily prompting critical consideration of the broader power inequalities that are affecting the lives of Afghan women, or how audiences in the Global North might themselves be complicit in the "complex of unequal material relationships and processes which structure engagements between the global South and global North" (Wilson, 2015, p. 804). Moreover, to paraphrase Wilson (2015), while such images might encourage girls from the Global North to empathize with, or be "inspired" by, Afghan girls doing action sports, reading such images with a "selective appropriation of elements of feminist thinking" means that concepts of imperialism and race tend to be rendered "invisible" (p. 804).

In the context of postfeminist spectatorship and posthumanitarian communication discourses, Sport for Youth's positive images of Afghan girls doing action sports have been largely effective in evoking "reflexivity of the spectator" (Calkin, 2015, p. 655), and this is particularly the case for girls and women with an interest in sport, and especially action sports. For example, Amanda revealed how such images prompted her to reflect upon her own gendered experiences of action sports:

> As a [participant] myself, I think seeing an Afghan girl [doing action sports]… it's like we are just doing the same activity. That's a really beautiful thing, and to know that they have that opportunity to do it. … Obviously in the developed world such as UK and America and across Europe, we haven't had to fight for equality in the same way that girls in Afghanistan have, but they're the inspiration. If they can do it, if they can [do action sports] and they can break stereotypes, then we can do anything as well. It's great to have that inspiration coming from them!

In such comments, we see (problematic) elements of SDP "positive" imagery of girls from the Global South being used as a development version of "fitspiration" – inspiring girls and women in the gobal North to pursue their own active pursuits with more vigor and enthusiasm, essentially "if she can do it (with so little), then so can I." Our interviews further revealed the deeply affective responses such images had on women (particularly female action sport participants) from the Global North, prompting them to reflect upon their own lives before offering fleeting support (via "likes" and "shares"), donations to (ranging from one-off payments, to monthly donations, or the purchase of Sport for Youth branded clothing and products), or even volunteering for, the organization:

> I first heard about [Sport for Youth] through a media article, I think it was right when the facility opened. … [It] had a picture of an Afghan girl and [the founder], and I thought that was totally

> amazing. Because growing up in [global North country] I was [an action sport participant] since I was 14, there was hardly any girls [doing it]. … It was just amazing to think that there are actually girls [doing action sports] in Afghanistan… Then I… thought about applying as a volunteer… (Renee).
>
> I just started following [Sport for Youth] and getting very excited about the videos – especially the video of the girl [action sport participants] of Kabul video… I found it really moving. I was constantly sharing it, sharing other things with my colleagues at work, eventually it was apparent I'd probably rather be there than at my current job, so I applied… (Tracey).

Here we see interesting parallels with Koffman, Orgad, and Gill's (2015) "selfie humanitarianism" and Calkin's (2015) "post-feminist spectatorship." According to Calkin (2015) post-feminist spectatorship "disengages with narratives of emotion or moral urgency, opting instead to articulate gender inequality issues in a way that allows the spectator to inspect herself and consider her own agency" and "dispenses with grand narratives of emotion that justify public action on the basis of universal ideals – gender justice – and instead appeals to individual judgments about empowerment, success and global gender relations" (p. 659). For a select few women in the Global North (such as Renee and Tracey), consuming such images evoked not only reflexivity but also action in their desire to volunteer for this organization. But as Koffman et al. (2015) remind us, in most cases this "selfie-gaze outlines a highly narcissistic form of caring for the suffering of others, one in which the spectator/donor remains center stage" (p. 162).

Organizational Considerations: An Evolving Media Landscape

In the previous section we suggested that postfeminist discourses in the Global North are informing the way audiences in this part of the world may come to know, understand, and engage with images of the Global South. Herein, we turn our attention to the intersection of the ethical and market-driven considerations informing such photographs – who takes them and for what purposes – as well as the unintended consequences of such images and the considerations of the NGO to protect their students in a quickly changing media landscape.

When Sport for Youth first started producing imagery associated with their programs with Afghan youth in 2007, the organization had a clear understanding of their intended audience. The organizational website and online videos were produced for audiences in the Global North for the purposes of raising awareness of their work and fundraising. While the Sport for Youth website offered Western consumers an unlimited flow of information – stories, photos, videos, and art (and commodities) – featuring and/or produced by Sport for Youth staff and participants, the media consumption by Afghan youth was carefully controlled. In an interview in 2011, the founder explained that while the marketing and branding of Sport for Youth was being used to "connect with Western audiences and Western

youth and to raise money" for their projects in Afghanistan, it remained solely "an overseas activity." Continuing, he critically reflected: "we can't pretend that we're not influencing them [program participants] culturally at all, but we're trying to minimize that because…if [the children] start taking what is seen as western cultural cues [home with them] they'll be stopped from coming here very fast."

Over the next few years, however, Afghan youth increasingly gained access to social media via cheap smartphones, and thus the flow of information progressively became two-way. Observing such changes, the founder noted in a subsequent interview:

> I think a big thing that has changed between when we last talked [2011] is just the increase in use of smart phones, and simply photography, and just sharing of images on the social media; compared to even a year ago, Facebook plays such a big role in Afghanistan right now! Even just taking a photo four years ago was a huge taboo somehow and now everybody is taking photos simply because everybody has a camera on their smart phone, and just about everybody has a smart phone.

Continuing, he clarified that even "street working kids … are buying themselves $40 smartphones brand new from China" (2015). An Afghan staff member supported such observations: "Social media is something very big between the young people and putting their pictures up. They go to school and then back home and they have nothing to do except check their Facebook."

Arguably, the increasing access Afghan youth had to new media technologies was an important step in the democratization of digital knowledge. However, such changes also continue to have significant ethical implications for how SDP organizations represent their participants of SDP organizations and to whom. With Sport for Youth media and marketing materials no longer exclusively reaching audiences in the Global North, the organization recognized the need to take even greater care to ensure their participants are represented in ways that are culturally appropriate and that they feel are representative of their experiences. As Tina observed, "Half of our students are also our Facebook followers now, and they're liking every single thing that we post. So you want it [the photos and stories] to be something that they're excited to be a part of." Simply put, with an increasingly two-way flow of such images and narratives, Sport for Youth became even more accountable to their participants, as well as participants' families and communities, in terms of how they are representing their programs and participants.

Focusing specifically on how UNICEF uses Instagram to frame policy contexts of girls' education, Anderson (2016) identifies some of the "ethical complexities of imaging girls in digital policy spaces" (p. 89). As Anderson (2016) notes, in contrast to old media – including print communication – "new media enables users to be active participants in what they see, hear, and share with others in digital spaces," and this has important ethical implications for how

organizations engage with new media (p. 88). Continuing, Anderson (2016) suggests that the ethics of digital representation must be at the fore when considering the ways in which organizations "select and disseminate images of protected and vulnerable populations – like girls" (p. 91). While some scholars are examining the ethics involved in organizational digital representations of girls from the Global South, few are considering the unintended risks of such portrayals for girls, their families and communities, and to the programs.

The Risks of Representing Afghan Girls Doing Sport

With the popularity of social media has come considerable academic and public concern about the "gendered risks" posed to girls and young women in digital spaces (Ringrose & Barajas, 2011; Toffoletti, Thorpe, Pavlidis, Olive, & Moran, 2021). Yet it is important to note that such concerns – verging on moral panic at times – have focused almost entirely on the possible risks for girls and young women in the Global North (e.g., online predators, cyber bullying, the unintended consequences of sexting, body image issues; Dobson, 2015; Hasinoff, 2013; Salter, 2016), with little critical consideration of the gendered risks digital technologies may pose to girls and young women from the Global South.[1] Moreover, most of the feminist scholarship critically examining the Girl Effect and shifts in humanitarian communications has been largely theoretical, focusing particularly on the contradictions and inequitable global power relations evident in such campaigns. Yet, our interviews with Afghan staff revealed that the combination of increasing access to social media among Afghan youth and "positive" representations of Afghan girls can have serious implications for the safety of female staff and participants and the programs more broadly. The following comments from an Afghan female staff member are revealing here:

> When [Sport for Youth staff] post pictures of females, there is a chance that the boys will copy those pictures and then they're presented in a way like "I know this girl" and it gets very bad. That's one of the things. The other thing is some of the girls… don't like their pictures to be on Facebook.

Continuing, she highlighted the challenges for SDP organizations that have been using such images "effectively" (in terms of their ability to attract interest and fundraise) in their marketing and fundraising campaigns, but may not have (initially) considered the implications for some of their participants:

> These images are good for [Sport for Youth], but sometimes I think it could create bad problems for the girls if they appear in the

[1]Such risks gained global attention in July 2016 when Pakistani model, actress, women's rights activist and social media celebrity Qandeel Baloch was murdered by her brother after taunts from his friends that her social media usage was dishonoring his family.

> media. That's tricky! Also I can understand [Sport for Youth] too, that they want to share positive images but sometimes it could be difficult for the girls. If you go to the [Sport for Youth] website, you won't find any pictures of some of the Afghan female [Sport for Youth] staff … because they don't want to be shown.

During this interview, Holly prompted further to better understand the female Sport for Youth participants and staff concerns, to which she confirmed: "Oh yeah, they fear that their photos might be copied by the boys and then they would create problems for them. The boys photo-shop them [the images] and it can create a big problem." While her own family are "very supportive … and so caring and loving," she added that they have also warned her to "be aware of your pictures putting them on Facebook … that could create problems for you or that could make us look very bad in our community." Another Afghan female staff member admitted that "my husband doesn't like my photo on Facebook," and for many of their female students, "their brothers don't like their sisters on Facebook or television or any other media." In response to a question regarding the fears Afghan girls and women have about their images appearing in social media, she explained "they fear of them getting in the wrong hands, yes … fears of the Taliban." Similarly, a male Afghan staff member involved in media production for Sport for Youth explained:

> They [female students] worry that these photos will be seen by the Taliban … yes, a small percentage of our students think like this! But there is also a traditional thing … like they're wondering … I'm [doing sport] here and when I become in the photo and then [Sport for Youth] posts it on Facebook and once my cousins or my relatives see me on social media or on the Internet, it will be something very bad for my family.

Continuing, he added "they're a bit scared of the camera," before recalling a situation the previous year when a group of 50 new female "Back to School" students did not return the following day. When the community relations officer asked the families why they decided not to allow their daughters to return, she received the following response: "Oh, there was a boy doing photography and videoing them, so they're not going there." As this example suggests, feminist critiques of Girl Effect–related communications would do well to pay further attention to the local contexts in which social media portrayals of girls (particularly portrayals of sport and education) may carry a unique set of risks and consequences.

Importantly, however, as Ahmad's (2020; Ahmad & Thorpe, 2020) research on Muslim sportswomen reveals, it is important to consider how Muslim women navigate social media spaces with careful consideration for their culture, ethnicity, and religion. To minimize potential risks, the Muslim sportswomen in Ahmad's (2020) study took care in using the digital affordances within particular platforms to be visible in the ways of their own choosing. Similarly, some of the Muslim

women staff of Sport for Youth spoke of using an array of strategies to protect themselves online (i.e., using multiple accounts for friends and family, not posting photos of themselves) and to ensure their social media usage did not reflect badly on their families. It is thus important for feminist SDP scholars to also keep in mind that the girls and women participating in, and working for, such programs are not dupes to the risks, responsibilities, and opportunities in using social media. Any feminist media and communications research focused on SDP would do well to keep in mind how local girls and women may be actively engaging with online and organizational media content for their own purposes.

Organizational Responses to the Risks of Representation

In 2016, with the aim toward more sustainable and safer programs, the Afghanistan facilities were passed over to local staff with international staff relocating to the headquarters in a large European city and offering ongoing support to the local programs via daily communications and short-term visits. In the lead-up to this transition, local staff were trained in taking photographs and video content of the everyday programming and events. While local Afghan staff embraced the new opportunities to take ownership of creating media content, some admitted tensions and struggles negotiating two different sets of cultural expectations. For example, while the international staff at HQ were asking for particular images and stories (that they know "work" for the purposes of fundraising or reporting), the Afghan female students remained cautious and occasionally accused the local communications staff of "spying" or "doing business." According to an Afghan male staff member, he often faces questions from female participants such as the following: "Why are you doing this [taking photos]? You're doing business on me?" Continuing, he admitted, "It's very challenging doing my job, especially doing photography or videoing or making documentaries. Like when I'm doing photos, we have 25 students in one class, and many of them will be covering their faces and hiding from the camera. I'm telling them don't worry, I'm not taping you." As this comment suggests, local staff must work at the intersection of expectations from their international colleagues who are trying to create a particular set of images and narratives for the purposes of fundraising and local participants' cultural concerns about photography, surveillance and their personal safety.

Responding quickly to the changing media environment and associated risks, Sport for Youth took various measures to ensure participants and staff always have the option not to appear in photos: "We ask students who wants to be in the photograph, and who doesn't want to be. When a person doesn't want to be in a photograph we tell them to come to the front of the class so they won't be in the photograph. We are careful with those things" (male Afghan staff member). These concerns were explicitly written into the international Sport for Youth communications policy documents. In November 2016, an Afghan staff member further updated this document, adding 11 items to the section "Afghanistan Specific Guidelines" to ensure that all involved in media content production recognize the cultural complexities of photography in this context and are aware

of the organizational guidelines that seek to minimize any risks to female participants. Examples of items from these guidelines include: "Do not take photos outside. Taking photos of students outside can create questions for parents"; "Do not take inappropriate photos of [*sic*] girls, e.g., up skirt, down blouse, short sleeves or without scarf. These photos will create problems for her in community and also will create problems for us"; and "Try to only take photos of girls over the age of 10." During interviews, international and local Sport for Youth staff also described various strategies to try to minimize risks to the program, staff, and participants, including carefully controlling who has access to the Afghanistan facilities and the types of images and narratives that result from any media visits. At times of heightened risk, they do not allow international media visits and have tried to minimize media coverage in Afghanistan. For example, in response to the greatly heightened risk following US-troop withdrawal and Taliban takeover of all major Afghan cities in 2021 (including the three locations of Sport for Youth programs), the organization removed all references to their Afghan programs on their websites and social media (as well as closing their facilities until it was safe enough to reopen). Prior to 2021, local staff had also been encouraged and supported to develop on-the-ground strategies to implement Sport for Youth's broader policies in a locally specific and culturally appropriate manner. For example, one Afghan staff member described subtly placing red stickers outside classrooms in which female students had chosen not to be photographed. The purpose of the red sticker was to ensure that no photographs are accidently taken by any staff or visitors.

Local Representations of Afghan Girls

Concluding their visual analyses of the pictures that UNICEF uses and of the policy framing of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), Kirk and Magno (2009) and Magno and Kirk (2008) argued for the importance of humanitarian and development organizations including girls in both image production and message dissemination (also see Anderson, 2016). A growing number of NGOs, and various SDP organizations, are increasingly providing opportunities for participants to document their own experiences, with some suggesting that these new forms of "communicative intervention" signal an important shift "from rescuer to facilitator of people's own representations of their own lives and to a polyphony of voices and versions that can engage all in the critical acts of interpretation and interruption" (Cornwall, 2016, p. 154). Sport for Youth provides opportunities for students to take photographs and produce videos and blogs for the organizational website. For example, as part of their curriculum across their Afghan sites, they host a yearly Global Citizens in Action course that involves the creation of various media items "for communication purposes."

One example from this class was a film titled "Afghan Youth Leaders Fight Against Street Harassment" that was made available on YouTube. Produced by Sport for Youth students from the Mazar-y-Sharif facility, the film reveals the process of Afghan boys and girls working together to produce a short film that seeks to challenge gender-based harassment on the streets. Furthermore, in the

Youth Leadership program, participants at the Kabul facility engage in communication and media training, which involves critical thinking about "knowing who your audience is," "choosing who you are messaging to," and "what the demand for that is" (male Afghan staff member). In an interview with one Afghan staff member involved in running these classes, he explained that while participants in this program "loved what international staff are doing" with media representations of Sport for Youth, they are focused on "being innovative in ways that match our national and cultural contexts." When asked specifically about what participants in this program are taught about representing girls and women, he noted: "It is very important in Afghanistan to be looking after girls and women, and our culture. In class we explain that if you're taking photos of girls, you need to ask her, and you can't show her like in a fashion magazine as that's just not right in Afghanistan." In this program, Youth Leaders also have opportunities to experiment with new media technologies, including Go Pro training sessions.

The opportunities for Sport for Youth participants and staff to be involved in their own narrative constructions, and the cultural considerations being given to representing Afghan girls and women, are to be applauded. However, it is also important to consider the (unintended) influence international staff and dominant organizational representations and narratives may have on the ways local participants and staff might choose to represent their own lives and experiences. As a male Afghan staff member admitted, "most of our students do focus on the stories of female staff and students… because their stories are very interesting and very important… they're very brave to teach here." With further prompting about how such images and stories were received among local audiences, he admitted that there had been a change in recent years with Afghan people becoming more accepting of girls doing sport. Moreover, there is a small but growing group of young Afghan women who are "activists" and are "using social media to raise their voices."[2] Just a few years ago, it was "very shocking to see girls doing sport, but now people are getting used to it." In the Youth Leadership program, many Sport for Youth participants focus on producing content related to female students and staff because they are "really inspired by what the international staff have done, and they want to do that. They're also inspired by photos like the famous National Geographic image [of an Afghan girl with strikingly green eyes gazing at the camera]," but they are also encouraged in class to "think locally – what we need to do inside our own country and also for international audiences."

In the process of international staff working with and training local staff, the local communications staff (and students) learned what types of images and narratives are most likely to be selected by those at HQ, thus shaping (even limiting) the representations they may ultimately create themselves. In so doing, the processes of NGOization are impacting the representations that local staff and participants imagine for themselves. Furthermore, the communications staff in

[2]Over the past decade there has been a rise of young Afghan women using social media to amplify their voices and for political purposes (Herman, 2015).

Europe "set weekly content collection tasks" for local staff, which suggests some openness to locally specific forms of representation but always within a framework informed by the demands of the highly competitive development communications market. For example, one international staff member proclaimed:

> We're really lucky with the staff being very understanding to us. They will be like "we will fulfil this brief," because they're very devoted and they're a great bunch of workers and very talented content producers, and that's including photographers and even with words as well and video. … I think it's very much a mutual relationship where there's understanding on both points creatively, where they're putting their creativity in and they'll also fulfil what we need creatively, and then we put our creativity in. It's amazing how much they're learning, and we're learning at the same time (Amanda).

While some staff proclaimed a creative and productive relationship between communications staff in HQ and local sites, others were somewhat ambivalent, with one international staff member referring to local content producers as becoming "like our personal journalists who will interview the kids [and] collect that kind of data".

In sum, while the current trend for humanitarian and development organizations to encourage participants to become involved in "image production and message dissemination" and the creation of opportunities for local staff and participants to tell their own narratives might seem like signs of positive change, we need to be aware of how previous and ongoing unequal power relations and interactions with international staff and media content may be limiting the content they feel they are able to create and/or the content that they have learned will ultimately be used (or not) by the organization for marketing and fundraising purposes. Such modes of representation are never free from broader power relations; even when images are captured by local staff and participants themselves, such representations remain heavily influenced (either purposefully or inadvertently) by discursive regimes originating from the Global North.

Final Thoughts and Future Directions

In this chapter, we engaged with recent feminist considerations of shifting humanitarian communication styles and strategies to critically discuss the ethics and risks of NGOs representing girls from the Global South in SDP campaigns. In the latter part of the chapter, we examined the case of the action sport-focused NGO, Sport for Youth* (pseudonym), and their social media portrayals of Afghan girls. In so doing, we suggest that postfeminist discourses of agency and empowerment – as well as neoliberal and colonial assumptions – are reproduced in the production of such imagery and highlighted some of the unintended risks (i.e., dangers from Taliban; family shame; and social and physical risks of having a daughter associated with sport, education, and/or an international NGO) of

such portrayals for local female participants and their families. Recognizing such risks, the NGO promptly developed policies to protect their students and created opportunities for local staff and students to create and disseminate their own content.

To date, much of the feminist and post-humanitarian communication scholarship has focused on the representational strategies employed by aid and development campaigns with the aim of gaining attention, and ultimately funding, from international audiences and donors. However, more research is needed that considers how audiences in the Global North and South make meaning of such representations and the responses from different groups. It is also important to keep in mind that the power of representation is not simply a top-down or one-way process. In fact, local staff and participants also have some agency to inform, and even challenge, representational styles and strategies. For example, adopting a postcolonial feminist approach, Darnell and Hayhurst (2013) argue that targeted beneficiaries do have some "agency or ability to resist, change, or challenge the ways they participate and are represented in SDP programs" (p. 47), particularly through participatory approaches to research or monitoring and evaluation, visual representation such as photovoice or digital storytelling. Through such orientations, SDP participants may have the ability to capture their own photographs and images and tell their own stories. Darnell and Hayhurst further contend that sport may be a unique means through which targeted beneficiaries may emphasize identity and agency and where "actors in postcolonial spaces are increasingly using the Internet and new media to disseminate visual images and texts that *they have created*, so that the local is privileged, and resistance to stewardship is (potentially) mobilized" (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2013, p. 47).

While participatory approaches to visually representing SDP participants are an important intervention in the field (see Chapters 2 and 6), they are unlikely to serve as a panacea for addressing the inherent risks in posthumanitarian communication strategies as outlined in this chapter. Certainly, concerns abound related to the underlying power dynamics and potential for images created by participants to be (mis)appropriated for unintended purposes. In the "digital era," it remains challenging to control and protect sensitive information, despite the best efforts of both action researchers and NGOs to abide by ethical agreements to do so. In this light, we suggest that future feminist research would do well to pay attention to the intersections of risk, participatory visual research methods, the ethics of representation (for both research and organizational purposes) and SDP programming.

In sum, those producing and consuming Girl Effect–inspired "positive" imagery of girls and women from the Global South participating in SDP programs would do well to question the motives and assumptions underpinning their engagement with such media: What are the dominant, hegemonic, intended readings of such imagery, produced by whom and for what purpose? What are the power relations inherent in such imagery? What oppositional readings might be possible if we locate such imagery in the power relations between the Global North and Global South, and the historical and political workings of international development?

Chapter 8

Feminist Approaches to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

with Nida Ahmad

The interest in SDP has been accompanied by calls for robust systems to monitor (or measure) and evaluate (M&E) if and how change occurs through sport. These calls for M&E have emerged both from stakeholders within the SDP sector and those outside of it. Stakeholders working within the sector can include funders who wish to measure value for money of programming through social return on investment (SROI) analyses; practitioners who seek to improve their project's effectiveness and impact; or external evaluators hired by SDP projects to meet donor requirements for evaluation (Langer, 2015). Those outside of the sector include critics of the claims made by SDP projects (Ireland-Piper, 2013). We – the authorship team (AT) who engage with both domains – also prove vested in this topic, and we believe that critical feminist research on MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning) can both build the capacity of SDP projects and advance important discussions on the purpose and place of MEL within an organization or project.

In this chapter, we apply feminist perspectives and praxis to the topic of MEL within SDP and explore subsequent possibilities within sport, gender and development (SGD). Feminist critiques of MEL and feminist approaches to rethinking MEL are especially suited for SGD initiatives that seek to prioritize girls' and women's voices and ways of knowing in local contexts. Additionally, MEL systems – when designed with feminist principles – can reveal the existence of gender imbalances within any SDP project, ultimately allowing projects to achieve greater gender equity. The insights from this chapter demonstrate the possibility of embedding bespoke MEL systems that meet donor expectations, facilitate organizational learning, and align with an organization's philosophy. Perhaps most importantly, this chapter demonstrates how and why one should integrate feminist principles into the MEL process.

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Well-designed MEL systems *can* help SDP and SGD projects assess their programming and demonstrate the unique impact of sport. However, many organizations develop MEL systems "guided solely toward upwards accountability" to donors and not for their own institutional learning or improvement (Azevedo, Garwood, & Pretari, 2019, p. 492). In this chapter, we consider the broad pressures faced by Skateistan-South Africa (S-SA) to respond to the dominant expectations around MEL in SDP. The chapter then builds upon the overview of ASDP presented in Chapter 5 to examine the possibility of developing an MEL system and building organizational capacity in MEL. This process unfolds between the international staff (IS) of Skateistan, the local staff of S-SA, and the AT.

Background and Context

While Skateistan's work in Afghanistan has garnered the most attention from media and supporters within the SDP community, in this chapter, we focus on a 2016 training held at their Johannesburg (South Africa) facility. While Skateistan had been running skateboarding sessions in Johannesburg for several years, it was not until 2016 – and the opening of the newly built Skate School facility – that they could focus on building their educational programs and developing more systematic approaches to MEL.[1] During the time of our collaboration, S-SA sought assistance on designing and integrating an MEL system that facilitated their reporting to external entities, aligned with their program's sensibility and design, and was transferable to their projects in Afghanistan and Cambodia. As feminist academics, we saw this as a unique opportunity to explore and re-imagine the way that MEL is understood, taught, and represented within SDP contexts. In this chapter, we utilize feminist decolonial theory in combination with an innovative narrative approach to encourage locally specific approaches to MEL that disrupt global SDP/SGD knowledge hierarchies and engage S-SA staff (SSA).

Drawing upon broad feminist principles and a decolonial approach, we encouraged a (MEL) workshop approach that allowed for the co-construction of knowledge about MEL practices and avoided a "top-down" mentality that positioned us (as academics) as sources of knowledge and the SSA as recipients. Such approaches are useful for reversing the paradigm by changing the sequence of typical training methods. This includes involving the intended beneficiaries and NGO staff (Mayoux & Chambers, 2005) in early discussions, decisions which are suggestive of moving toward a more participatory monitoring and evaluation strategy (Holte-McKenzie, Forde, & Theobald, 2006). In the case study presented in this chapter, we document our attempt to apply insights from feminist decolonial theory to both re-imagine the MEL workshop and to represent the findings/knowledge of this endeavor. In so doing, we hope this chapter makes a unique contribution to the growing body of literature on MEL in SDP,

[1]In 2017, the Skate School had a total of 291 active students, 40% of whom are girls, with 94% of the students coming from low-income backgrounds (Skateistan, 2017, p. 33).

particularly in outlining how one might utilize insights from feminist decolonial theory to develop meaningful MEL trainings and practices. This chapter establishes insights into the MEL process that derive from the direct experiences of practitioners and academics and reveals the importance of considering feminist approaches to working in local contexts and with local communities, despite growing pressures from stakeholders and other key groups to "quantify" impact in particular ways.

Feminist Evaluation: Who Counts?

Feminist scholars have long questioned the dominance of particular forms of knowledge and challenged assumptions underpinning what "data" are and what ways of knowing count. They have often noted the exclusion of women's voices and knowledge, and this extends to the realm of evaluation as well. In the introduction of their special volume in *New Directions for Evaluation*, Sielbeck-Bowen, Brisolara, Seigart, Tischler, & Whitmore (2002) offer a corrective to this issue and outline six key understandings of feminist evaluation:

(1) Feminist evaluation has as a central focus the gender inequities that lead to social injustice.
(2) Discrimination or inequality based on gender is systemic and structural.
(3) Evaluation is a political activity; the contexts in which evaluation operates are politicized; and the personal experiences, perspectives, and characteristics evaluators bring to evaluations (and with which we interact) lead to a particular political stance.
(4) Knowledge is a powerful resource that serves an explicit or implicit purpose. Knowledge should be a resource of and for the people who create, hold, and share it. Consequently, the evaluation or research process can lead to significant negative or positive effects on the people involved in the evaluation/research.
(5) Knowledge and values are culturally, socially, and temporally contingent. Knowledge is also filtered through the knower.
(6) There are multiple ways of knowing; some ways are privileged over others (pp. 3–4).

This concise presentation has allowed for practitioners and scholars to apply feminist principles in their evaluation work although many readily acknowledge the challenges in doing this. For instance, Azevedo et al. (2019), a group of feminists working for Oxfam GB, reflect on their efforts to embed these values into their MEL work. In addition to considering the "successes and challenges" faced while utilizing MEL for gender equality, they also recognized the necessity to explore the "structural changes needed to bring about social changes through MEL and research more broadly" (Azevedo et al., 2019, p. 485).

Acknowledging these concerns, some feminist development scholars are working to advance approaches to MEL that can help highlight gender inequities.

Writing in a special issue focused on gender and MEL, Bowman and Sweetman (2014) state:

> MEL provides feminists with the means to explore the gendered impact of programmes and projects on the women and girls, and men and boys, whose lives are affected by it …. MEL can render development policymakers, practitioners and researchers accountable to the individuals and groups they aim to support, as well as accountable to the funders and supporters of that work. (p. 201)

Yet how such data are gathered, what knowledge is prioritized, and what is done with evidence are deeply political issues imbued with gendered power relations. Such inquiries and issues are also highly relevant to MEL in SDP.

Though not adopting a focused gender lens, Nicholls, Giles, and Sethna (2011) raised comparable questions and concerns for the SDP sector, arguing that "the increasing call for positivist scientific evidence limits our ability to incorporate knowledge from grassroots practitioners into the policy development process" (p. 250). Conducting interviews with 17 SDP practitioners, they reveal how policy within SDP, as well as development discourses more broadly, tend to prioritize voices and expertise from the Global North (Nicholls et al., 2011). Moreover, they argue that one of the challenges to incorporating and amplifying voices from the Global South is a discourse of partnership which fails to consider the power dynamic embedded within donor-recipient dyads as well as colonial legacies around knowledge, voice, and expertise (Nicholls et al., 2011). This is one issue that could be mitigated by more attention to feminist principles in MEL, and examples do exist within SDP wherein partnerships appear to have carefully considered the power dynamics within the "donor-recipient-researcher" arrangement.

In their work with *Go Sisters*, an SDP project in Zambia focused on girls' empowerment, Kay, Mansfield, and Jeanes (2016) sought to create a space for reciprocal learning to proceed within their research project. They worked with the *Go Sisters* staff to help establish an M&E system that aligned with the requirements of their key donor and helped to develop the research capacity of the organization. Within the collaboration, they sought to imbue knowledge and insights from *Go Sisters* staff throughout the research and evaluation process (Museke, Namukanga, & Palmer-Felgate, 2016). One critical component of this was the need for qualitative approaches in order to monitor and evaluate the program's success and effectiveness. As Kay et al. (2016) note, critiques of qualitative methods in SDP within M&E "do not always distinguish between 'stories' compiled for promotional purposes and bona fide research-based accounts obtained through rigorous qualitative enquiry" (p. 224). They point to two examples wherein qualitative data and implicit challenges to the notion of objective and detached research afforded key learning opportunities for *Go Sisters*.

Over the past few years, some scholars have turned their attention to SDP practitioners to better understand their experiences and perspectives on M&E (Harris, 2018; Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014; Kaufman, Rosenbauer, & Moore, 2013).

Kaufman et al. (2013) sought to understand how SFD practitioners in the Caribbean felt about M&E in order to assist others who seek to create effective M&E systems. Through interviews with five program coordinators, the following themes emerged which provided insight into the challenges faced by those tasked with M&E responsibilities: the need for capacity building; lack of sufficient time; difficult geographies; (the need for) technology and online tools; and passion for results. These concerns likely prove common to those working in the field, but as Harris and Adams (2016) suggest, we may not know them because (with noted exceptions) practitioners' perspectives on M&E are seldom sought. Moreover, Harris and Adams (2016) argue that

> Practitioners have a limited voice in the discursive formation of evidence and to date have been unable to challenge dominant approaches to evidence. To what extent practitioners are docile bodies and represent dominant or alternative discourses are open to debate.
>
> (p. 104)

In their estimation, SFD scholarship would be well served to learn from, and understand, practitioners' "relationship and view of evidence" (Harris & Adams, 2016, p. 104). Harris (2018) answers this call and further makes the case that practitioners are best suited to offer valuable insights into the M&E process because they are "entirely contextualized within their projects and are well placed to make sense of and reflect upon the extent to which any change is manifesting itself" (p. 3). To sum, much of this literature presents M&E as a critical element of SDP programming, especially for practitioners to report outcomes and demonstrate the effectiveness of SDP. It further shows how M&E "patterns of work" are increasingly becoming critical to the sustainability of the SDP field (McSweeney et al., forthcoming, p. 12).

In addition to the calls for more engagement with practitioners, scholars in both SDP and international development are considering broader questions of evidence and M&E in increasingly complex ways. For instance, Henne's (2017) recent work on the power of "indicator culture" implores SDP scholars to move away from an exclusive focus on human actors as the sole shapers of M&E to consider the ways that technologies hold sway in the MEL realm. This research encourages us to consider how indicators are agentic and become both "descriptive and instructive" when it comes to SDP projects and outcomes (Henne, 2017). Eyben, Guijt, Roche, and Shutt's (2015) work on *The Big Push Forward* (conference and initiatives) within the international development sector raised meaningful questions about the "results and evidence agenda." Commencing in September 2010, the "Big Pushback" initiative consisted of an informal network of development practitioners interested in "constructive ways to advance conceptually and methodologically … beyond the narrow bureaucratic protocols that assume guaranteed predictable outcomes" (The Big Push Forward, n.d., "About," para. 2). For Eyben, Guijt, Roche, and Shutt (2015), the results agenda is designed "to improve and manage development aid through protocols,

procedures, and mechanisms for reporting, tracking, disbursing, appraising, and evaluating its effectiveness and impact" (p. 1). In a similar vein, other development scholars critique indicator culture in development writ large, suggesting that there is an urgent need to question "indicator culture" that is mostly driven by Global North actors in wealthy, industrialized nations, ensuring that "indicators emerge through social processes shaped by power relations, expertise, and techniques of measurement" (Merry, 2016, p. 25). Thus, Eyben, Guijt, Roche, and Shutt (2015) and Merry (2016) seek to move scholars and practitioners beyond a straightforward belief in the value of evidence. They work to identify "collective efforts to make development work for social justice" as opposed to top-down approaches to M&E (The Big Push Forward, n.d., "What We Are," para. 6). They inspire new lines of questioning about MEL that are significant for work in SDP, such as: Who is asking for evidence? How is power associated with knowledge? Who is seen as a credible source or reporter of evidence? This chapter seeks to explore such questions and bridges the divide between academic and practitioner insights on M&E, in part, by foregrounding how local Skateistan practitioners and IS respond to various calls within the sector for evidence, results, and robust M&E systems.

Toward a Feminist Decolonial Approach to MEL: Framing the Case Study

As feminist researchers, we are generally highly critical of top-down approaches to training and education and thus approached the S-SA training with specific understandings about what this training could and should look like. Mainly, we sought to find ways to collaborate and work with international and local staff to ensure that the methods being developed consider local knowledge and are meaningful to the local program. In so doing, our theoretical orientation and methodological approach were guided by feminist decolonial theory and crystallization, which are complementary but distinct ways of unsettling notions and representations of knowledge and power. Feminist approaches to the decolonization of SDP also underpin our thinking about the politics, power relations, and potential of MEL (see Chapter 2 for more on decolonization in SDP). In an applied sense, we used insights from decolonial thinkers to inform how we constructed and delivered the workshop.

Our desire to engage in a more collaborative process of MEL training aligns with recent calls from academic writing in the SDP field (e.g., Sherry, Schulenkorf, Seal, Nicholson, & Hoye, 2017; Spaaij, Schulenkorf, Jeanes, & Oxford, 2018). While we do not claim that our approach to MEL training was participatory action research (PAR) in its purest sense, we included many of the typical sensibilities of PAR, which includes careful considerations of "participation, power, and reflexivity" (Spaaij et al., 2018, p. 27). As academics traveling to South Africa from the United States and Aotearoa New Zealand, we were especially mindful of embracing a "decolonial research consciousness that [was] … attentive to the productions, circuits, policing(s), and geopolitics of

knowledge" throughout the entirety of this project (Murrey, 2017, p. 80). Outlining such sensibilities, Murrey (2017) suggests that this type of approach "refrains from claims to authority and challenges the positivist notions of objective knowledge …. [It] is an ethos that is questioning, humble, and grounded in the respectful turn and return to the voices and stories of people" (p. 80). Murrey's (2017) representation of their research in Cameroon included "de-privileged knowledge expression [by] including poetry, joke-telling, and narrative" to highlight how knowledge is co-created through exchanges as opposed to emanating from one (or more) particular academic experts (p. 80). We attempt to access this sensibility in the narrative "write-up" of this chapter.

Additionally, taking feminist critiques of evaluation and MEL to heart, we did not approach the workshop process as "experts" seeking to "empower" local staff with "our" knowledge of MEL. Instead, we sought to break down power relations and create space for dialogue and mutual learning between the authors and the staff, before, during, and after the workshop. We did this when we sought regular feedback on the training schedule, workbook materials, and the training itself. We intentionally co-designed a program that valued the multiple voices and perspectives of those involved in this process, even (and especially when) those voices diverged, revealed uncomfortable tensions, and offered insights that challenged our perceptions and understandings.

These practical approaches reflect the tenets of decolonial theory and its utility in SDP (Mendoza, 2015; also see Chapter 2). Mendoza (2015) offers a comprehensive overview of decolonial theory and its history. For our purposes, the central tenet of decolonial theory that we sought to utilize was the ways in which knowledge is (re)conceptualized. According to Mendoza (2015), colonialism and coloniality (the present-day manifestation of colonialism) purport that:

> European knowledge production was accredited as the only valid knowledge, [and] indigenous epistemologies were relegated to the status of primitive superstition or destroyed. Eurocentrism locked intersubjective relations between the European and the non-European in a temporal frame that always positioned the European as more advanced.
>
> (Decolonial theory, para. 6)

This matters within our project as we recognized the potential for (mis) understandings of who could and would be knowledge producers within this workshop and within this research. That is, as researchers, we traveled from outside South Africa with academic and geopolitical "credentials," and we were likely perceived as bringing knowledge to the local staff.[2] Aware of potential knowledge hierarchies, we tried to complicate such perceptions, as evidenced in

[2]Although we did not collect biographical information on the local staff, to our knowledge and recollection, none of the staff had relocated to South Africa to work for the organization, and they could all be considered "local" staff. These are our interpretations and not necessarily that of the organization or the participants.

both the structure of the workshop and the responses provided in the case study narrative section below.

We also draw insights from decolonial feminist scholar Lugones (2010) whose work affords us the opportunity to consider how "categorical, dichotomous, hierarchical logic" is vital to "modern, colonial, capitalist thinking about race, gender, and sexuality" (p. 741). In this case, we considered how this logic manifests in the establishment of categories, dichotomies, and hierarchies present in most SDP MEL as it relies on logic frameworks (logframes) to set its course. We did not necessarily seek to challenge the notion or viability of MEL through the course of the workshop, though this certainly could be a part of the application of decolonial theory. In this project we sought to build on Lugones' (2010) understanding that "feminism does not just provide an account of the oppression of women … it enable[s] women to understand their situation without succumbing to it" (p. 747). In a similar vein, within the workshop we sought to acknowledge the tensions around MEL that exist for the organization and the sector. Alongside this, we co-created space to identify resources for making the most of the industry expectations around M&E.

Crystallization

As both SDP research and approaches to M&E have been long dominated by scholars working in the Global North (Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2016; also see Chapter 2), the acute recognition of the politics of knowledge underscores our decision to represent our research findings through an innovative narrative approach that challenges our positions as author/experts. In our representational approach, we draw inspiration from Ellingson's (2009) application and explication of crystallization. Ellingson (2009) builds upon foundational work by Richardson (1997) and Lather and Smithies (1997) who sought to push boundaries of accepted representational strategies within qualitative research. The metaphor of the crystal is often juxtaposed with the triangle (of triangulation) to underscore a key difference in conceptions of knowledge:

> Crystallization enables qualitative researchers to generate less naïve representations. We can continue to engage in and learn from systematic knowledge production without simply perpetuating the remnants of positivism in our writing. Crystallization allows more freedom to portray accounts that reflect current sensibilities about the slippery nature of claiming knowledge without forcing us to give up systematic research methods.
>
> (Ellingson, 2009, p. 15)

In this case, crystallization allows for multiple truths to be shared without disavowing the research process entirely. In practical terms, the use of crystallization enabled us the space to deliver a training that included "traditional"

research methods and emphasized the importance of systematically collecting data, while also presenting our findings from this training in a creative and dynamic manner. We represent the findings/learnings from this training and larger experience via an "imagined" dialogue that transcends space, time, and medium. While imagined is used in the previous sentence to acknowledge the constructed nature of the findings, it also indicates that the interactions and creation of the M&E training took place across multiple spaces (i.e., office at Skateistan's International Headquarters; Skateistan Johannesburg offices and skatepark; personal accommodations), mediums (i.e., face-to-face, email, Skype), and countries (i.e., Cambodia, Germany, Aotearoa New Zealand, South Africa, United States).

In the sections below, we present important contextual information on the MEL process as well as key moments from the research process to move toward additional understanding about MEL for both S-SA and the realm of SDP. The deliberate co-existence of voices – from academics, SSA, and IS – is done to avoid any sort of hierarchical ordering of voices, perspectives, and knowledge. While some excerpts below have been edited slightly to protect confidential information, the edits do not compromise the sentiments expressed. This co-mingling of voices is an important element of decolonizing the expected "outcome" of research such as this as well as the presumed dynamic in much SDP work.

MEL in Skateistan-South Africa: A Narrative Approach

The following paragraphs offer important background information about the MEL workshop and the context of the case study that is the focus of the remainder of this chapter. In early 2016, Megan and Holly were involved in a meeting with the international Skateistan team in their headquarters in Berlin. This meeting emerged from Holly's research with Skateistan. The meeting considered the potential for Skateistan to develop MEL approaches that could meet the organization's needs and were consistent with their philosophies, as opposed to being steered by their funders (Win, 2004). Following this meeting, Megan engaged in regular virtual meetings with an IS member involved in program development across the three countries and another IS member who was recently appointed the role of managing M&E across the organization. Based on her experience of consulting with other organizations on these topics, she offered feedback on Skateistan's Performance Management Plan, theory of change, and other key organization documents. This pro bono consulting role included regular Skype meetings, written feedback, and productive questions on the aforementioned documents. These exchanges built the foundation for the eventual training workshop at S-SA.

Through the course of these encounters and the eventual workshop with S-SA, our assistance was sought to help Skateistan move from a focus on M&E to an approach that encouraged monitoring, evaluation, *and* organizational learning (MEL). The organization sought to make M&E more useful and meaningful for the organization instead of just fulfilling a requirement for donors; they hoped to

learn and grow from this process. Skateistan staff wanted to embed organizational learning in the M&E process through collaboration with academics (the AT) as well as through considered involvement of IS and local practitioners. The vision for the workshop at S-SA was that staff would learn about M&E and be encouraged to think through their M&E options. Then, they would be equipped to make informed decisions about *their* MEL systems and design an approach that worked with and for them. To facilitate this, Megan and Holly were to acquaint SSA with a range of methods available for evaluating their work with youth. Importantly, we were not expected to design or implement M&E systems for the organization. We wanted to introduce a variety of ideas and options and to let those closest to the work decide on a path forward for the organization.

The Workshop

It was from both Megan and Holly's relationships with Skateistan that the opportunity to plan and deliver S-SA M&E training/workshop came about. They worked closely with international Skateistan staff to plan an eight-day workshop that would meet the needs of the organization and local staff. The preparations included the creation of a workbook that was used daily and that could be used for future training sessions at other locations. Closer to the date of the training, Thorpe was unable to travel to Johannesburg due to health reasons, one of her (then) PhD students (Nida Ahmad) stepped in to help facilitate the workshop. Following a series of research team meetings, in July 2016, Chawansky and Ahmad traveled to Johannesburg to facilitate the workshop. Their travel costs, accommodation, and a modest per diem were paid for by S-SA through grant funding that was allocated for M&E development.

The eight-day workshop included the following topics: interviews, observations, visual and creative methods, life history methods, curriculum-based methods, and focus groups. Each day of the workshop differed due to the on-the-ground demands of local staff, but most days included a lecture/discussion on a method, an applied activity that allowed practitioners to "try out" the methods and reflections on the viability of the method for S-SA. The reflections focused on cultural considerations and necessary modifications within the South African context. For most days during the eight-day program (see Table 1), four local staff members attended the training sessions, as did a member of the IS. On occasion, part-time or volunteer staff would participate in portions of the training, and we welcomed a dynamic, open space where people and ideas could flow in and out freely.

Chawansky and Ahmad worked closely throughout the workshop to prepare and then to reflect on the sessions. They submitted daily summaries of learnings and reflections to Thorpe to ensure she could remain engaged in the process and offer feedback. These summaries were also shared via email with IS to keep them informed of the workshop progress. Throughout the entire process, reflections from the authors occurred in person and via email or Skype with IS. Interviews and focus groups involving staff members occurred at the international

Table 1. Skateistan Eight-Day M&E Workshop Agenda.

Day 1	Introductions: Conducted Interviews on MEL Knowledge with staff
Day 2	Morning: Key concepts in research and M&E and Interviews Afternoon: Applied session
Day 3	Morning: Systematic observations Afternoon: Applied session
Day 4	Morning: Visual and creative methods Afternoon: Applied session
Day 5	Morning: Life history method (testimonials) Afternoon: Child-centered research and ethics
Day 6	Morning: Discussion: Curriculum-based methods Afternoon: Case study/writing up results
Day 7	Morning: Focus groups Afternoon: Analysis of data/write-up
Day 8	Morning: Final questions/evaluation of training

headquarters of Skateistan as well as the S-SA offices. During the training, we collected data and reflections on the experiences for both the research projects and also used these moments as teaching tools. At the time of our workshop with S-SA, Skateistan was in the early stages of developing organizational MEL approaches and strategies, and the workshop and subsequent MEL efforts were part of this broader work. Since our first training session, the organization has continued to invest considerable time and energies in their MEL approaches, and in March 2017, they joined forces with a consortium of eight international NGOs to form the "Action Impact Network" – a group that is working together to "develop a series of indicators and data collection tools to measure the impact of youth action sport for development programs" (Skatesian, 2017, p. 36). This involvement reflects Skateistan's continued interest and investment in this area.

Crystallization of the Voices of MEL

This section summarizes the key learnings that emerged from our attempt to co-construct an M&E workshop and assist in the development of an organization's MEL practices while engaging with feminist decolonial perspectives. As noted above, our practical application of this theoretical orientation valued collaboration, local and organizational knowledge, and sought to break down expected knowledge hierarchies related to both the workshop and the embedded academic/practitioner dynamics. To organize this section, we offer creative and re-created conversations in response to a series of common questions about MEL within SDP. In our attempt to bring multiple voices into conversation, we offer (partial)

answers to these questions by drawing upon interviews, email correspondence, daily summaries of the training sessions, and post-training reflection notes.

The voices of IS, SSA, or the AT are presented in a manner that complicates a singular and linear narrative about MEL. The IS includes those Skateistan staff members who worked across projects/locations on MEL while the SSA staff included the four participants who worked for the organization and attended the 2016 training. As the AT, we seek to avoid speaking over or for our collaborators or to write ourselves in as the experts. The lack of clear attribution to one named individual is intentional. The narratives that follow are intentionally provocative to add complexity and nuance to the discussion rather than seeking to prescribe a correct way to "do" MEL workshops and systems. Decolonization is ongoing, and in this understanding, it requires embracing the incompleteness and messiness of the process, and subsequently, of the learnings that have continued long after the workshop came to a close.

Who Needs Evidence?

Skateistan-South Africa Staff (SSA): For us on the ground, we recognize the importance of producing all of these data. I also understand that it's very difficult to meet the interests of the funders … without ending up overexaggerating what's really happening. You do need all these reports to be able to give back so the funding can keep on happening, but how do we stay true to what's on the ground and expectations which are met elsewhere and not evidenced in the data and reports? Finding that balance can be tricky.

International Staff (IS): I think until now a lot of our M&E has been really donor-driven so it has really been this reactive thing. Now we've gotten to the point that we have so many questions internally, but we've set a goal for ourselves to become leaders in M&E for action sports for development. So now we want to go over and above that and do some stuff for ourselves and try out new things.

Authorship Team (AT): Well, I think this is a wonderful place to be in. It's great to hear that you're interested in moving beyond the need to simply evidence the effectiveness of your programs. I understand that quantifying impact is important, and you need to do this for reporting to funders, etc., but you are an organization that has always prided yourselves on thinking outside of the box. I suggest there is a lot of potential for you to explore more qualitative M&E methods, more creative approaches to M&E, and finding ways to really draw upon the skills and strengths of your local staff to design approaches that are culturally specific and meaningful to them, and not just funders.

IS: Yes, we want to be one step ahead of any requirements of our donors and we also want to dictate the way that it's happening. But because we have programs in three countries now, we do need to be consistent across the sites, so that we're not doing it one way in one location and another way in another location. We need to do it to a certain standard that we can then convince people that that's enough, and that's all that they need us to do. That will make it easier on our side if we can have it harmonized globally.

AT: Okay, so as I understand it, a challenge moving forward is finding ways of doing M&E that are consistent across your programs. This makes sense. But I would also encourage you to continue to look for ways to modify or adapt some of your M&E approaches so that they are locally specific, culturally meaningful, and culturally appropriate in each location.

What Kind of Evidence Is Useful?

IS: For the first few years, I think we've been influenced by what we've seen other NGOs doing with M&E, as well as expectations from funders. We have been focused on outputs. We've also been very curious about what the outcomes are, but we haven't been very consistent about how we're measuring those. We have tried different surveys. We wanted to do a giant baseline survey covering all of our theory of change outcomes at one point, but our imagination was sort of limited to surveys and media. We've also used blog posts and photos and stuff, as well as student testimonials that were mainly being collected for media or for donor reports specifically. Mostly we've been focusing on trying to quantify our outputs, but I think we could be open to exploring other approaches.

IS: I agree, sometimes it has been hard for us to understand the potential of things like a student interview or a student quote, and to organize those things according to particular outcomes, or to have these conversations about M&E that dig a little bit deeper. We've tried to do focus groups, but there's been a lack of training at all levels on how to do a focus group.

IS: Yes, this is a good opportunity to stop and think about how we're doing M&E and why we're doing it that way. I think potentially a lot of organizations are falling into a trap of following what someone else has done and then trying to make that fit into what they're doing. I think we've also fallen into that trap a tiny little bit as well. Like, we're trying to move away from surveys but at the moment it's still the easiest and most familiar for us.

AT: It's exciting to see that within your organization you're starting to question some of the pressures and assumptions underpinning dominant M&E models. There are actually quite a few researchers and practitioners out there who are also questioning some of the assumptions and expectations of M&E and advocating alternative approaches. We have experience using quantitative methods, but much more experience using qualitative methods in our research and we would love to work with you to explore some alternative approaches to how M&E is typically thought to be done.

How Will Evidence Work for Us as an Organization?

IS: Something we're really keen to move toward is data-driven decision-making, but we're also really excited about developing methods that are maybe more consistent with our organization's philosophy. One thing we do need to consider is how we can develop M&E approaches that aren't too heavy, aren't too onerous on our local staff, because they are already really busy with everything they're doing on a day-to-day basis.

AT: It's great that you're considering how the implementation of M&E will impact upon your local staff workloads. I think it's also important to consider how local staff might perceive the processes and methods of M&E: Are they perceived as valuable? Do they feel they have had input in developing or modifying the method? Do they know where that information is going and how it's being used by whom and for what? Perhaps if we can provide opportunities for local staff to be involved in developing a method they might have better buy-in and commitment to using it on a regular basis. Of course, this doesn't need to be all of the methods used, but maybe one method, or something where there is some space for co-construction to help with that sense of value and understanding of why it's used.

AT: So perhaps this is something we can explore. What's the potential there for working with local staff so that they understand the purpose of this, and it doesn't feel like some onerous task being imposed upon them from above, but actually that they are part of its process? We will certainly try to design the training program with these aims in mind.

How Will We Co-construct Knowledge about M&E within the Workshop?

AT: We are really excited about this opportunity. We are working through some of our preliminary plans and ideas, and one thing we know for certain is that we really want this to be a collaborative, hands-on training, and that we will not adopt a "top-down" approach. I sense that we all agree that any methods or expertise we can bring must have buy in and be relevant to local staff, so we plan to create a training that allows for not only the presentation of information on different MEL methods (i.e., interviews, focus groups, systematic observations, curriculum-based methods) but also piloting various methods and reflection on these methods as they relate to the local context. We wanted to raise this with you now to make sure we are all on the "same page" and to make sure our expectations are the same.

IS: Thank you for sharing your initial plans with us. We have talked through your proposed training program at the international office, and we're all really excited for what this will offer our local staff, and also for future possibilities to roll out similar training across our sites.

IS: Yes, I agree, your proposed approach is very interesting. I think it's important to keep in mind though, that data needs to be collected systematically and consistently for it to have value. So, for me, that's where the main focus of the training should really be, and then once the data is there, it's not that you're just collecting it for nothing, we are going to be able to do a certain amount of analysis in-house. But it will also be really valuable, because a lot of sport development organizations and a lot of projects are only for six months or for a year or a workshop or they've got such small data points in time, the timeframes are always quite small. If we've got high quality data collected over five or 10 years, this might be the first time that there are those data sets over such a long period of time. That could then be interesting to people from lots of different

backgrounds, and they'll be able to use that data in different ways. So I think it's more about focusing on the collection than the analysis.

AT: Okay, this is good feedback as we were planning to include some analysis in the training. But if you would like us to focus more on data collection methods, then we can certainly do this. This makes good sense and will give us a bit more time to work through some of the challenges of gathering data – systematically and consistently – in local contexts. For example, after discussing different approaches to doing systematic observations, we could go out and practice doing systematic observations in a busy skatepark during a lesson and then head back inside to discuss some of the challenges of doing this method in this space at that time.

SSA: That will be really great if we can get some hands-on experience taking these methods into the spaces that we actually run our classes. The skatepark is so busy that it's hard to imagine how to collect good quality data there. The local staff have talked about the proposed program and like the opportunities that you're suggesting we will have to contribute to some of the methods. I think the one area that we should reflect more on as an organization, because we have the various sites, but also because South Africa is so culturally diverse, is the cultural basis. How do we use or develop methods that consider the different cultural knowledge we have here? How can we use a particular method but still learn from our participants or staff experiences without trying to make them fit into our definition of confidence or Western ideas of whatever leadership is, or whatever these concepts are we're looking at? So, how can we try to broaden our definitions to include lots of worldviews in different M&E methods?

AT: These are really insightful questions that we will need to discuss at the training, and it's highly likely that you will have some of the answers to these questions because you know your context better than anyone! Ultimately, the training is only going to be useful if the approaches can be used by SSA staff in ways that make sense for your site.

What Are Your Hopes and Fears about Participating in an M&E Training?

AT: Finally, we're here with eight days of M&E training ahead of us. Thanks so much to everyone for their input on the program thus far and for being here to share this journey. Before we get started, we'd like to open it up to hear some of your thoughts and feelings about the planned training.

SSA: I won't lie, the MEL that we're doing now, it's the first time for me. It is a lot of responsibility being the point person, but so far I've done as much as I can where I've tried to understand what it is that is required of our team for this particular situation with [name of funder] where they want me to report back on very specific things or create these tools for very specific things. I guess we're stressed because we don't know exactly how it's going to be done, but I think it's exciting for us because we always want to know, like what's the outcome.

S-SA: My concern is more about your motivation. What are you trying to achieve in coming all the way to South Africa? What are your expectations? Or at least your preconceived expectations before anything happens here?

AT: I hope I can learn a lot from this experience and see what's going on here on the ground in S-SA. We're also hoping that we can make a little contribution to make your life in M&E easier. We know that people have to do this [M&E] if they want to stay alive and get funding, and sometimes it's not a nice process all the time. But I think we can help make it a better experience, that's what we want to help do. At the end of the day, we're coming here to train you all in M&E, but I think we will learn from each other. I think it's more likely that we'll learn from each other. We might be coming in with knowledge about M&E, but you are bringing all of your knowledge and expertise about this local context. Hopefully together we can help you and Skateistan move a little further down the road toward effective and efficient M&E processes.

What Are Attributes of an Effective Day of M&E Training?

AT: Overall, today was a good day. The space we've tried to create to try out some of the methods we've introduced seems to be working. The hard part is fitting in some of what we planned despite the fact that the local staff still have their outreach and other duties to complete throughout the day. One thing we do need to prioritize is more time for reflection and conversation about whether some of these M&E ideas are viable. This has come up as something that the staff would like more time to process, so I think we need to revisit some of our daily plans, change things around a little bit, to ensure there is more time and space for reflection and discussion.

IS: I'm really happy with how the training went today. I think that it felt really good. It was fun. A lot of balance, at least half of the time was very hands-on, there was very little lectures – some info shared then space it out with some activities. I think making it hands-on made it really successful for everybody, they could quickly imagine integrating it into what they do on a day-to-day basis. So, I think we are doing something good. I was really grateful that you came super-prepared and had that whole guidebook and whole agenda made. Your organization was really appreciated.

SSA: What I learned today after doing the discussion about observations and then trying to do them in the skate lesson, is that we had these grand plans and we realized that okay, these were just plans in our heads. When we actually did the tool itself we came back with nothing and literally had to rework it.

SSA: Something that came up for me is thinking about the kids. I really think that kids are very sensitive, and they can easily see a change in some of the ways we have been interacting with them. But now, it seems like it is going to have much more of a structure, so the question is: does it take away from our sessions now that we know what the agenda is?

AT: That is an interesting question. How can you make sure that the steps you are taking to collect data do not interfere with how you are delivering your sessions, or with how the children respond to you/the session? Some of this might be out of your control, but it is good to be aware of this possibility and to think about ways to work through this issue.

Did the Workshop Change Staff Perceptions of M&E?

IS: I think we've built up a lot of capacity to actually administer M&E, and I think there's more buy-in and more understanding of what it entails and more willingness to do it. I think we still have quite a bit of learning to do, but we're on the right track.

SSA: After the training, I now feel that *I* can go to corporations now and do a proper M&E and be proud. We've done it in the past, but we didn't know methods. We knew about monitoring and evaluation, but at some point, remember, we were like "what does MEL stand for?" And you said Monitoring, Evaluation, and the Learning. At that early stage in the training, we knew, but we didn't know. I feel like now we have a proper understanding. We can do it more professionally, which gives us confidence to be like, "Hey, we're teaching kids stuff, and yes, they're learning stuff."

IS: Going forward, I think it's going to make our job much easier in terms of structure. Because we need to know what we are doing and why we are doing it, like which boxes we need to tick. That's really important, because it's very easy to just waste time with some of our agendas, and some of our own personal agendas and think that they are part of what we are doing here at Skateistan … I think this training has helped us, equipping us with more skills to order all this chaos. So, I think, just giving something very precise and cohesive, and it has got much more of a solid direction. It's much clearer. I think that's what it is going to help with. That's what I'm taking out of this.

IS: Now that I've witnessed your approach and been involved, I think now we should be able to replicate that, adapt it very efficiently, I would say, fairly rapidly to a whole new context. I know you guys put in a ton of labor and made that PDF and stuff, but I think that it's not just for this year, because it's going to support us going forward to do one of these in Afghanistan in the near future. This training has given me a lot of confidence that I can teach this stuff and that we can find ways to teach it ourselves. I think it's great to have you here too, just for moral support and encouragement, as well as to share your knowledge.

Conclusion

> Life without MEL [training] is a bit weird because now we have all the cool and useful information and knowledge, but we don't know where to start. I won't lie, it's a bit nice not learning the whole day for 10 days [*sic*], but it was really nice having you guys coming from so far to share your expertise with us.
>
> – SSA

We conclude this chapter with an unsolicited message offered by one SSA staff member to the AT. This email excerpt came to the AT after we had returned to our respective homes and captures some of the complex feelings we have about the workshop. The staff member suggests that getting back to daily life after an intense training on MEL can be an adjustment. Throughout the duration of our

training we were conscious of the double duty that SSA managed. They worked hard to stay attentive and engaged during the MEL training, and we often adjusted our plans because of their other commitments and daily responsibilities. We changed plans on the fly to integrate unique learning opportunities and learned to sit back and watch when no adjustments were possible. We tried hard to challenge traditional knowledge hierarchies within the workshop through co-creating the workshop plan and the teaching style we imparted, but in the end, we were still lauded for "sharing our expertise" with the local staff. This post-training reflection perhaps indicates some of the limitations of our desired decolonial approach and of the structures we were up against.

Despite this, we remain committed to both further developing a decolonial approach and to assisting the organization in their MEL efforts. We have also maintained contact with Skateistan since completing the MEL workshop with S-SA. Thorpe continued her larger research project with the organization, and in June 2017, Chawansky observed the international Skateistan staff lead a MEL training in Cambodia. She served as a "critical friend" and provided constructive feedback to the staff running the sessions for their first time. The training attended to the local staff needs and differed in significant ways from the S-SA workshop, but stayed true to the spirit of trying to build MEL culture from within the organization. While Skateistan seeks some common tools and indicators across program locations, they are flexible enough to adjust and manage their expectations around MEL as it relates to local staff, language, experience, and cultural context. We believe that we took important steps in the S-SA workshop to help Skateistan in their efforts toward rethinking MEL.[3]

Through this example we shared why and how one might decolonize elements of SDP, especially as it relates to transnational partnerships and relationships. We see this chapter as extending Oxford and Spaaij's (2019) use of decolonial feminist analysis insofar as it illustrates our attempt to actively decolonize the *process* of teaching, learning, and subsequently designing MEL for one organization. Our narrative approach sought to bring to life our quest to co-create knowledge and amplify local voices, especially when it concerns MEL. This topic (MEL) proves especially fruitful for this task as so many of the conversations we had with SSA alluded to the imposition of M&E from outside (funders). Though the voices and perspectives of funders were not included in an explicit sense in this research, their perspectives and voices pervaded the conversations we had before and during the workshop.

As a counter to this, our final section did not privilege our analysis or voices as another external imposition telling readers what or how to interpret the information presented. Taking inspiration from feminist critiques of evaluation and MEL, we attempted to challenge conventions of transnational knowledge production with our representational choice. In this way, we follow Mignolo (2009) who argues that "it is not enough to change the content of the conversation … it is

[3]For more information on Skateistan's current MEL efforts, please see https://www.skateistan.org/our-impact.

of the essence to change the *terms* of the conversation" (italics included, p. 162). We believe this is one of the most valuable contributions of this chapter, and we hope it inspires further considerations of the politics of knowledge and representation in MEL and SDP. Using feminist decolonial theory as a guide to inform our workshop allowed us to co-construct knowledge in unique and unanticipated ways. In this instance, we suggest it helped us to recognize the opportunities and challenges that come with continuous reflection on power, privilege, and knowledge within MEL and the SDP sector. Using this approach does not guarantee success or specific outcomes; it is an ongoing project and process.

While decolonization is always an ongoing project, the quest to rethink how, where, and from whom knowledge originates is the cornerstone of this chapter. In so doing, this chapter offers a specific example of some of the key issues raised in Chapter 2. We hope the insights we share via our case study are useful to those working in MEL or researching MEL or SGD. The insights intend to encourage a rethinking of how one can "do" MEL and of what feminist principles can bring to the practice of MEL. The case study also extends recent critiques of how and why we evaluate our programs, what we "do" with data, and how to make it work for organizations. The long-standing feminist concerns around what "counts" as knowledge, whose voices are prioritized, and how such knowledge is represented (in reports or research) are equally valid in SGD. We believe this chapter offers a model and encouragement for those working in the sector to pay attention to the power relations and ethical considerations in such knowledge production processes. We also hope that our efforts to offer an alternative representational style – a narrative style that privileges multiple voices across time and space – encourage others to rethink the ways we write in our academic outputs as well as organizational reports. There is much potential in future feminist-inspired SGD work to explore alternative modes of representation that better reflect the seismic shifts still required to destabilize the patriarchal, neocolonialist, and Global North/South power relations that remain deeply entrenched in the field of SDP scholarship and practice.

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Epilogue: Sport, Gender and Development

Martha Saavedra

Optimism or pessimism? I waiver between these two dispositions in general, but also with respect to the future of sport, gender, and development. The immediate context for my ambivalence is, of course, the current state us humans find ourselves in – the COVID-19 pandemic and its concomitant horsemen – anthropogenic climate change, racial injustice, inequity, inequality, and political violence. The global economic crisis resulting from the pandemic will reverberate for some time. Even while the wealthiest economies are already experiencing "an exceptionally strong but uneven recovery," the generational legacies will be severe, impacting the already vulnerable hardest (World Bank, 2021). A global vaccine "apartheid" is endemic. We know that progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by the 2030 target date was "already off track" before COVID, but, per the UN, over the last 18 months, the global extreme poverty rate has risen for the first time in over 20 years (United Nations, 2021). The economic circumstances are matched politically. Civil unrest has increased globally as has forced displacement; the UNHCR reports that 82.4 million people, 1 in 95 humans, were displaced in 2020 (Bloem & Salemi, 2021; IEP, 2021; Raleigh, 2020; UNHCR, 2021).[1] Xenophobia, homophobia, and populist nationalism see many countries veering toward what Zakaria (1997) has called "illiberal democracy" or what Levitsky and Way (2010) refer to as "competitive authoritarianism."

For many women and girls, the situation is particularly dire. Traditional protections have broken down, access to health, welfare, and legal services has diminished, while possibilities of harm from transactional sex to trafficking to

[1]Trends in violence, armed conflict, civil unrest during COVID and over the last two decades have been mixed and heterogeneous. For instance, while IEP found that civil unrest increased, Bloem and Salemi also found a "short-term decline in inter-group conflict events associated with COVID-19." All can be true. For more nuanced analyses of trends in "conflict and peace," see the works cited. Hintjens and Zarkov provide an overview of theories and methods (Hintjens & Zarkov, 2014).

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violence have increased (Nesamoney, Darmstadt, & Wise, 2021). As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres relates in the most recent SDG report:

> Women have faced increased domestic violence, child marriage is projected to rise after a decline in recent years, and unpaid and underpaid care work is increasingly and disproportionately falling on the shoulders of women and girls, impacting educational and income opportunities and health.
>
> (United Nations, 2021)

As I work from home, side-eyeing COVID dashboards and wildfire incident maps while thinking about how to situate the current state of sport, gender, and development within this moment, it is easy for these global trends to feed my pessimism.[2]

I nevertheless claim optimism, albeit a bleak version. The challenges are immense and that humans will successfully meet them is uncertain. I do not have an optimism about the inevitability of progress à la Steven Pinker, who has become renowned for his insistence that the world is continuing to improve in key areas (i.e., higher life expectancy, increased wealth, reduced poverty) (see Gray, 2015; Moyn, 2018; Wesołowski, 2020). Hope – if it can be called that – is due to the fact that I see that there are others who are doing the hard work to figure things out in humble, thoughtful, rigorous, critically informed and brave ways. I have observed them through my close work with practitioners in one sport and development organization, research on a few others, and absorbing the work of the three authors of this volume.

I have written elsewhere about Afrofuturism as an inspiration for sport and development – through imagination, hope, and play, it seeks to actively create a better future while also incorporating the past, "sometimes in a painful confrontation, by seeking to correct inequities and transcend legacies" (Saavedra, 2018, p. 215). This is the aesthetic from which I will proceed recognizing that the state of knowledge around gender, sport, and development, as evidenced by this volume, has advanced, become more nuanced, and is informed by values and methods that will give us an outside chance to make some small contribution toward well-being and peace in a distressed world.

The essence of this volume "troubles" the space of gender, sport, and development – the authors interrogate ideas, practices, relationships, and ways of being. Lyndsay Hayhurst, Holly Thorpe, and Megan Chawansky sit with discomfort, critique accepted power relationships, and push boundaries. After reading through this work, one cannot emerge "born again" to evangelize for the movement. The sport and development movement, such as it is, does exist and if one chooses to engage, one can bring this knowledge and perspective to the "game." This leads me to reflect on what it is that we have learned – what I have learned – about sport, gender, and development and what else there is to consider.

[2] https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/.

Here I will not review or summarize the arguments the authors make in the volume but will elaborate on three strands of thought that occurred to me as I read through the text.

The first is to better understand how we can benefit from considering sport more broadly beyond "Development" – outside of the "sport for good" institutionalized movement to gain a more nuanced understanding of how "development" takes place or not within sport. This latter perspective draws on critiques of the development industry as a whole. A second strand is the need to continue building on the work presented here that examines specific, mundane administrative and service delivery practices and processes within gender, sport, and development projects to understand better how to mitigate harm – including the unintentional – and elevate those who may have the most transformative positive impact. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning is certainly contested, yet intentional, reflective, and data-driven (yes – especially contested!) learning is vital to improve the ongoing work. The third strand is to extend gender and feminist analysis and practice to the experience of boys and men in sport and development. Gender is not the reserve of women, gender equity will not advance without men and boys, and some existing gender norms – often labeled under the rubric of "toxic masculinity" – can be particularly harmful to men and boys.

Connecting Gender with Sport with Development

I first came to this area of research serendipitously. Over lunch on a spring day in 1992, my faculty colleagues and I were discussing how our semesters were going. I went on and on about Title IX – a topic in a class I was teaching on sexual politics in the United States, reminiscing about my own quest for gender equality and justice within sport, i.e., to gain varsity status for the women's soccer team when I was in college.[3] My colleague, Stephen Woolpert, said the obvious – I should teach a January term class on women and sport. It was such an "a-ha" moment – the course would be a way to bridge two important parts of my life – sports and scholarship. As I put together the syllabus that summer and fall, I found very little literature in the library on sport in Africa – my regional area of expertise – or any other non-Western region, and even less on women and sport in the Global South. The six-page 96-item bibliography – almost all in English – that I gathered for the 1993 January class had only three such citations: Eric Wagner's 1989 *Sport in Asia and Africa: A Comparative Handbook*, M.K. Singh's 1990 *Women and Sports in India*, and a 1992 article in *Runner's World* on Kenyan women runners by Linda Villarosa (Singh, 1990; Villarosa, 1992; Wagner, 1989).[4] An internet search

[3]For those unfamiliar with Title IX, it is a 1972 US Federal amendment that prohibits sex-based discrimination in any education program that receives Federal financial assistance. It has had a profound impact on sports for girls and women, but has far-reaching implications well beyond sports (USDE, 2021).

[4]Villarosa, by the way, contributed recently to the New York Times *1619 Project*, with an article about the damage done by and persistence of myths on racial difference (Villarosa, 2019).

now reveals a few relevant publications that I either missed or were totally unavailable to me at the time (Adedeji, 1978, 1982; Anyanwu, 1980; Leirvaag, 1989; Roberts, 1992) and a few more that were published in the following year (Aliu, Chado, & Adeyanju, 1993; De La Rey & Paruk, 1993; Paruk & De la Rey, 1993). Still the gap in the literature was clear. Being able to do something about it though took time, especially as in the next few years I transitioned to a new job, had a baby, and got divorced. Finally, in 1998, I secured funding from the West African Research Association and a leave of absence from my job to spend 12 weeks – half with my four-year-old son in tow – in Senegal to study the state of women and sport there.

Though my training was in political science and international relations, and I had done prior research on gender, development, and agrarian politics (a la Ester Boserup), my initial work on women's sport did not focus on what Gillian Hart calls big "D" *Development* – i.e., the industry and institutions that deliberately intervene to create change, presumably change that is positive (Hart, 2010), but rather it was to document and understand what was happening on the ground in Senegal. I researched a wide range of sporting disciplines (basketball, football, handball, track and field among others), the circumstances for athletes, coaches, referees, administrators, spectators, advocates, and scholars, and the policies and practices of clubs, federations, ministries, leagues, research and training institutes, local NGOs and INGOs. Issues of law, economics, education, culture, religion, health, and family emerged. And I barely scratched the surface (Saavedra, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2015). The approach perhaps could be filed more under "comparative gender studies" and the "development of sport for women." Little "d" development was an ever-present issue with the economy still adjusting to the January 1994 CFA devaluation. Unemployment, rural-to-urban migration, and housing were particular pressure points. Though sport was officially amateur per the national laws that governed all sport, the popularity of women's basketball especially in Dakar meant a top club, *une association sportive et culturelle (ASC)*, was able to provide some support in kind or otherwise to a number of the *basketballeuse*. It was a means of livelihood for women who played the game.

Though big "D" *Development* as an industry was and is very present in Senegal through many international development agencies and NGOs working on health, agriculture, education and environment, etc., the institutionalized sport, gender, and development nexus that is extant now in much of the world had not emerged in Senegal at the end of the 1990s. Sport, though, was a recipient of bilateral and multilateral aid. Periodically, this would be symbolized by a representative of a European agency presenting some balls to the league at a tournament. CONFEJES, *la Conférence des ministres de la jeunesse et des sports de la Francophonie*, is headquartered in Dakar and is involved in promoting transnational cooperation in sport. The Ministry of Youth and Sport had policies directed toward youth, especially to address delinquency, through the ASCs. The *associations'*

structure and relationship to the state mirrors that in France emanating from the *association loi 1901* that guaranteed the rights of citizens to organize into nonprofit associations and a Sporting code that "recognizes the promotion and development of sports as being in the public interest" (Verheyden, 2010).[5] The Senegalese state did not control the day-to-day affairs of the *associations* but provided the governance structure, regulations, and sometimes funding. Many ASCs offered multiple sports, art, dance, and other cultural and educational activities for youth. While boys and young men were the overwhelming beneficiaries, many of the ASCs offered sports and activities to girls and women as well, though none of the major clubs organized women's football at the time (see Saavedra, 2003). And as I was told repeatedly that by law, there was *pas de discrimination sexuelle*, women were able to take up opportunities throughout the clubs, leagues, and associations and challenge boundaries beyond what women in the US sporting world were able to do. Indeed, I met a few women who served as referees in men's events – including football and *la lutte*, wrestling.

It is true that my time in Senegal occurred before the current iteration of the sport and development movement really got underway. Though I have returned several times since I have not been able to conduct extensive further research there. I note, however, that there are only four Senegalese organizations registered on the Sport and Development platform and all seem to be ASCs.[6] They also seem distinct from the "classic" sport and development organization that has an expat component and is raising funds globally to support its work. The organization of sporting associations in Senegal represents an older iteration of the state and civil society mutually recognizing the possibilities of sport for achieving social goals and agreeing to a social contract legally defined. I am familiar with one project that fits the gender, sport, and development frame, Ladies Turn (http://www.ladiesturn.org/), established in 2009 by two Senegalese, the former captain and manager the women's national football team, and an American who was working first with the UN and then the US State Department in Dakar (and was also a UC Berkeley Development Studies graduate). Operating within the Senegalese legal framework, its goal was to promote women's football in its own right and as a tool for gender equality ("Ladies Turn" n.d.; B. Packer, 2019). It successfully organized several tournaments through 2018 raising the visibility of the women's game and providing the members with hands-on organizational and management experience, access to networks, and group solidarity. The "demonstration" effect echoes the motto *Tunaweza* or "We can do it" of Moving the Goalposts of Kilifi, Kenya. As more and more people see women play a sport, it can become normalized, as happened with basketball.

Being a women footballer or *footballeuse* in Senegal though comes with social stigma unlike the prominent public accolades and social status accorded a *basketballeuse* that I witnessed. In her ethnography, Beth Packer explores how the

[5]Now split into the Ministry of Sport and the Ministry of Youth, Employment, and Citizen Construction.

[6]https://www.sportanddev.org/en/connect.

term *footballeuse* "symbolizes the intentional representation of a socially undesirable feminine masculinity" and a violation of gender norms (2019). The women become "moral deviants" subject to "physical abuse, social ostracism, and structural violence." Yet, paradoxically, they unabashedly "adopt the discrediting attributes attached to women's soccer" (2019, pp. 130–131). In this embodied act of queer resistance (regardless of their sexuality), Packer argues that they assert moral agency and create transformative ethical selves that are fully legible within the moral ethos of suffering and piety found in both global sport – no pain, no gain – and the Senegalese Sufi traditions – most especially as embodied by Cheikh Amadou Bamba, the founder of the Murid brother (2019, pp. 130, 138–139). Their unapologetic resistance brings them strength, virtue, and power and can lead to "new gendered subjectivities and Muslim spatialities" (2019, p. 130). The transformative power of gender and sport is fully evident here. It is deeply grounded in the local sociocultural milieu, in dialogue with global discourses, and institutions of sport with the women as the principal agents. While the football leagues and tournaments they play are situated with the framework of Senegalese civil society, including the *associations*, the *footballuese'* voluntary adoption of stigma to challenge oppressive gender norms through piety and moral agency exists outside big "D" development. As I have argued elsewhere, modern sport has always lent itself to instrumental purposes of those within state and society who sought to affect outcomes and bring about transformative change that can impact small "d" *development* (2009, p. 130; 2018). As the authors of this volume point out in Chapter 1, many women and girls who participate in sport outside of the formalities of structured SGD programs are overlooked by scholarly accounts (p. 9, this volume). Insights from research on such phenomena can inform the gender, sport, and development movement.

Learning Inside the Sport, Gender, and Development Movement

Existential questions that remain for sport and development are: "Can sport advance *development* objectives? What is the social impact of sport? Is it worth doing?" Because the quest for funding is so critical to many sport and development projects, accountability to funders whether the "donors" be philanthropists, foundations, governments, and/or taxpayers looms large for many in the movement. As such, Hayhurst, Thorpe, and Chawansky point out how monitoring and evaluation can become an obsession. Clarifying "theories of change," pondering logic models, devising metrics, determining outcomes, collecting and analyzing data, and then communicating impact through research findings, data visualization, and storytelling require much attention from those managing sport and development projects. Because of the pressures of balancing annual budgets, accountability often flows upwards and outwards. Throughout this volume the authors have deftly situated sport and development in its social and institutional environment and have argued that accountability to participants and communities should be of more consequence within projects and organizations. Accountability is a relational concept and through its practice and mechanisms

reflects asymmetries in relationships with measures often skewed to the interests of dominant actors. Thus, accountability is about *power* (Ebrahim, 2005). In the work I have been engaged in, I am more and more interested in understanding accountability within organizations, especially among the employees. One can consider governance practices and processes including information and data systems, communications, finance and budgeting, and human resources or what is now often called "people and culture." Perhaps belying another part of my academic training, organizational theory, and particularly the influence of the early twentieth-century writer and management consultant, Mary Parker Follet, I would argue that the mundane day-to-day practices and processes impacting the people within the organization are perhaps the most important node of deep positive transformation as well as potential harm so must be attended to thoughtfully and with care (see Metcalf & Urwick, 2003; Tonn, 2003). These are issues explored in Chapters 4, 5, and 8 of this volume, with a focus on the lived, embodied experiences of volunteers and staff.

How do such practices and processes emerge? Regulatory and licensing bodies dictate certain aspects of the structure, policies, and processes. The skills, experience, and values of founders and organizational leaders are a strong influence. The sociocultural milieu of the community, sector, participants, and staff also impacts norms and expectations. However, as a specific organizational culture takes shape it may deviate from the local social norms, and, thus, a bureaucratic politics theoretical approach suggests that those joining the organization will tend to conform more to the organization's culture, i.e., "where you stand depends on where you sit" (see Allison, 1971).

In this volume, Hayhurst, Thorpe, and Chawansky have suggested several attributes of a sport and development organizational culture that would be conducive to more equitable and just outcomes. These include humility, accepting discomfort, stark recognition of power differentials, heightened cross-cultural competencies, and a fundamental and constant realization that one's own view of the world is not universal. Starting from this frame can help to avoid "moral licensing" issues, where because someone believes they and/or their initiative is "doing good," they are inclined to cut corners, lie, or cheat elsewhere (Dubner, 2018).

Adopting an explicit code of conduct that promotes ethical behavior, transparency and effectiveness may be an option. There is a movement across NGOs to do so (e.g., see the Core Humanitarian Standard https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/), but as Lloyd and de la Casas noted in their 2006 review of 35 codes of conduct, most are upwardly accountable, focused on reporting, compliance with laws and regulations, and financial management (2006). In addition to the values that the authors offer, when looking inward, a few criteria can be applied to discern accountability to the people served. These might include: Are the staff well supported to do their job effectively? Are they treated fairly and equitably? Compensation packages should at least meet minimum wage and benefit requirements, but can an organization go farther – for instance, to offer parental leave, adequate health insurance, and wages that fight back against the expat conundrum – by which two people doing the same job in the same location

will be paid differently simply because of where they were born and of which country they are a citizen? (Soccer without Borders, 2021) Is there constructive supervision, mentoring, training, assessment, and feedback? Are there clear opportunities for professional development and career advancement? Are there policies and practices to work through the inevitable internal conflicts? Is problem-solving and learning encouraged? Is it ok to fail, iterate, and innovate? Are staff given time to reflect and learn? Is there an ongoing evaluation of issues that may affect staff safety and security and protocols and contingency plans developed and revisited regularly? With sport and development organizations, child safeguarding is a vital area and a similar orientation should be taken toward the staff – paid and volunteer. Following Mary Parker Follet, I would argue that a sport and development organization that spends a lot of time on these "people" issues, emphasizing worker empowerment and participatory democracy, will not only be more effective but also engender transformative positive social change.

Yet, these practices and processes do not actually answer the three questions I began this section with, "Can sport advance *development* objectives? What is the social impact of sport? Is it worth doing?" A "people-focused" organization may have positive outcomes, but it does not have to be a sport and development organization. Many others in the sport and development world have sought to answer these questions. My first foray into the institutionalized formal world of sport and development was in the winter of 2005, when UNICEF and Swiss Academy for Development invited me to New York for a meeting for a workshop on "monitoring and evaluation of sports-based programming for development." The objective of the meeting was to explore the "state of the art in monitoring and evaluation of sports for development programs," which at the time were geared toward the Millennium Development Goals. Along with representatives from UK Sport, FIFA, the Population Council, the Women's Sport Federation, the Sport Councils from Norway and the Netherlands, the Commonwealth Games, Right to Play, SCORE, and Magic Bus India, as well as several academics, over three days, we hashed through logic models, a variety of indicators, and methods of measurement that could possibly objectively reveal how sport programs contributed to development. It was edifying, but the bottom line as Fred Coalter, one of the key participants, has expressed many times, is that the answers to my three questions are elusive (e.g., Coalter, 2009, 2013a, 2013b).

There is of course a lively broad and deep debate about whether any of the big "D" interventions have actually achieved "Development." My inclination on this has been shaped by critical, political economy analyses such as those of Arturo Escobar (2011), James Ferguson (1990), Gillian Hart (2004) and Michael Watts (2013). There is another political economy approach though that has also influenced me – that of development economists as exemplified by the 2019 Nobel Laureates in Economics, Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Michael Kremer and the work at the J-PAL lab at MIT. They developed methods of impact evaluation using rigorous randomized controlled trials in which marginal differences in interventions are tested and compared on multiple dimensions to understand impact. These microeconomic quasi-experimental methods allow more manageable questions to be answered (Banerjee, Duflo, & Kremer, 2020;

Olken, 2020). William Easterly (2009) contrasts these marginal or incremental approaches with projects that have had large transformational ambitions. Hubris, ahistoricism, and inability to actually isolate the impact of such interventions has led to much waste, disappointment, and replication of failed and damaging efforts over several decades.

Ted Miguel, who has worked closely with all three Laureates, founded UC Berkeley's Center for Effective Global Action (cega.berkeley.edu) to collaborate and conduct similar research.[7] I have talked with him and other CEGA affiliates about the efficacy of sport and development. Based on other research, they were skeptical of the impact of sport per se. What of the opportunity costs given to scare resources? Sport can mobilize a lot of resources, but is this enough to warrant investments of time, effort, money when those resources could be deployed elsewhere? It is only recently that one of the first studies to use the RCT methodologies to investigate sport as a tool for development was done (Beaman, Herskowitz, Keleher, & Magruder, 2020). The evaluation was on Mercy Corps' *Sports for Change (SFC)* program in Liberia that links soft skills development to economic outcomes. It is a life skills program mediated through sports clubs intending to promote socioemotional skills to improve psychological well-being, and foster traits that boost labor force productivity. They recruited 2,400 youth and randomly selected them by lottery into a group which would receive the SFC intervention and another half which would not. The two groups were stratified by gender. They conducted baseline line surveys on 35 variables including indices on psychosocial well-being and life events. The intervention ran from July 2013 to February 2014 and consisted of 30 sport clubs of 40 youth each with two coaches, who each trained for five days and had the support of four coach mentors. The endline survey took place a year later in April and May 2015. (Ebola intervened, but did not prevent them from conducting the endline survey.) They found that the "Sports for Change program exerted limited impacts on psychosocial outcomes, but did increase labor force engagement a year after the intervention by a statistically significant 0.12 standard deviations" though they were unable to isolate the mechanism. The lack of impact on psychosocial outcomes is significant for the sport and development community. Is the assumption that undergirds so many programs wrong? Or is it a matter of design? The researchers did wonder if a different method of selecting and training coaches might generate a different effect. Further research on this would be welcome, especially as many theories of change assume highly trained skilled coaches do make a difference as do the type and character of the activities engaged in. One other result from this study is intriguing especially from a gender perspective. A "heterogeneity analysis suggests that more disadvantaged groups (women, less educated, young, and those without vocational training) benefited most from the program" (p. 25). Again, for those

[7]Relative to the previous section, CEGA is very explicit and committed to their core values: Empathy; Rigor; Diversity; Equity & Inclusion; Openness, and Flexibility. They are also committed to collaborating with scholars from the Global South and have robust exchange programs. See: https://cega.berkeley.edu/values/.

who have worked in such programs, this finding rings true. Further research could help illuminate why and how.

Gender and Boys

The fact that women were among those who benefited most from the Mercy Corps intervention, among other things, highlights that there were those who did not benefit as much – the young men. As a mother of two young men, in this final section I especially want to tease out why gendering boys and young men within sport, gender, and development is also important for both men and women.

A few years ago, I was present for a student discussion led by African women about femicide in various African countries. The August 2019 murder of University of Cape Town student, Uyinene Mrwetyana, had brought the issue to the fore. It was a charged and difficult discussion that the women handled with poetry, art, grace, and facts. Yet, I realized later that one set of facts had not emerged – overall murder rates. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime 2019 study provides these and more. Women are more often killed by family and intimate partners, with the home being the most dangerous place for a woman. While globally, the number of women murdered declined between 2012 and 2017, the percentage of women killed by intimate partners or family members increased to 47% of all women murdered (p. 14). Nevertheless, most homicide victims, 81% are men, largely driven by homicide rates in the Americas followed by Africa, with males between the age of 15 and 29 at the highest risk (p. 15). And 90% of perpetrators are men (p. 23). In regions where the overall rate of murder falls, it is largely due to the fall in the number of men murdered. In some countries in Asia and Europe, with lower murder rates, the number of male and female homicide victims is roughly equal. The UNDOC report explains the differences as follows:

> Homicides involving men tend to be affected to a greater extent by sociopolitical developments, drug markets and other volatile factors that cause spikes in killings. Homicides involving women tend to be determined by long-term issues such as gender roles, social norms, the status of women in society, discrimination and gender equality. Since these factors are less volatile, the rate at which women are killed tends to be more stable.
>
> (UNODC, 2019, pp. 24–25)

While the analysis about differential impacts of volatile and long-term issues may hold, I do want to question the analytical appellation of "gender" to only the long-term factors. I would argue that gender roles and social norms around what it means to be a man, especially a young man, directly contribute to the situations that may lead a man to becoming a victim or perpetrator of homicide. This is one of the most extreme examples of how gender expectations can negatively affect men (Barker, 2005). But there are many other outcomes of concern of which many directly impact the girls and women in the lives of the boys and men. Hence, I

would suggest that *all* sport and development programs (including those focused on young boys and men) are in fact gendered, but that analysis exploring these gendered dimensions are often overlooked, both theoretically and programmatically. If program designers, staff, and researchers intentionally rendered visible how gender, masculinity, and femininity operate and impact the participants within that space, this could enrich the program and lead to new possibilities.

Coaching Boys into Men, a project of Futures without Violence, is an example of an initiative seeking to directly affect the gendered social norms and expectations of young men as a means of violence prevention, especially in terms of bystander behavior. Using a series of tools and trainings, coaches – often based in schools – work on a day-to-day basis with young male athletes to model and promote respectful behavior on and off the field of play. The goal is to prevent relationship abuse, harassment, and sexual assault by altering gender norms that foster gender-based violence and promote bystander intervention. First implemented in the United States, the project has expanded to India, Australia, South Africa, Angola, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Japan, Mexico, Norway, and Trinidad, among other places. Elizabeth Miller undertook a three-year randomized-controlled trial in Sacramento from 2009 to 2012 with over 2,000 athletes from 16 high schools (eight were in the control group). The results found that those in the treatment group were more likely to report less abuse perpetration and more positive bystander behavior when witnessing abusive or disrespectful behavior by peers (Miller et al., 2014; Miller, Jaime, & McCauley, 2016). In 2016, Miller et al. (2020) undertook a similar study in 52 Pennsylvania middle schools. There were similar results "in increasing positive bystander behaviors and recognition of abusive behaviors and reducing relationship abuse perpetration" but there were no changes in intentions to intervene nor in exploratory outcomes (Miller et al., 2020, p. 246). The Parivartan Cricket project in India, focused on "coaching boys into men" and reducing gender-based violence, has also been studied (Bateman & Binns, 2014; Das, Ghosh, Miller, & Verma, 2012; Madhumita Das et al., 2015). While there are caveats to implementation, for programs seeking to impact gender-based violence, the Coaching Boys to Men offers a range of resources and toolkits. The CBIM can be implemented within a bespoke sport and development program, but also through existing schools and recreational youth sport programs.

Conclusion

While there is still much one can and should be pessimistic about, these various strands – the possibilities of new insights when exploring the loose boundaries of gender, sport, and development, opportunities to affect change by strengthening internal "people" processes, the promise of new knowledge production through randomized controlled trials, and prospects for violence prevention by engaging young men through sport – compel me to turn toward cautious optimism. There is work to be done. This book documents some of what we have seen thus far and helps to lay out a plan for future such work to continue in a more reflective manner.

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