SPORT FOR CHANGE: AN EXPLORATION INTO THEORY AND PRACTICE

by

Soolmaz Abooali
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Committee:

_____ Chair of Committee

_____

_____

_____ Graduate Program Director

_____ Dean, School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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Soolmaz Abooali
Master of Science
George Mason University, 2010
Bachelor of Arts
George Mason University, 2006

Director: Mara Schoeny, Professor
Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Summer Semester 2019
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Michael and our daughter Alexa Kiana.

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To my parents, Masood and Seema, the ones who know about 'conflict' beyond the words expressed in this dissertation, and whose support system enabled me to complete this work. To Michael, my partner, who has always stood by my side, and supported and encouraged me to reach the highest echelons of success. To my sisters, who were a part of this support system and for whom I strive to be a positive example. To Lexa, through whom I found peace. You are each my compass.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Conflict Resolution ..... CR
Sport for Change ..... SfC
Theory of Change ..... ToC

ABSTRACT

SPORT FOR CHANGE: AN EXPLORATION INTO THEORY AND PRACTICE

Soolmaz Abooali, Ph.D.

George Mason University, 2019

Dissertation Director: Dr. Mara Schoeny

This research study is a qualitative exploration into the Theory of Change used in programs that engage sport as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change. Primary data were gathered through open-ended interviews and observations with those who design and implement programs in order to understand how and why sport is used. An iterative research design generated key approaches that account for how micro-level efforts through sport is believed to foster macro-level positive change. This study describes, based on practitioner experience, how and why individuals are believed to overcome conflict through sport. In this manner, knowledge developed through practice will help to guide and potentially refocus knowledge developed through research in the sport for change and conflict resolution fields.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Scholars have called for rigorous analytical research to tackle the lack of theoretical underpinning in programs that use sport as a vehicle (Levermore 2008; Chen 2018; Coalter 2015; Ricigliano 2012; Massey, Whitley, Blom, and Gerstein 2015; Guiliannoti 2015) to address conflict and create positive change. There exists an even greater lack of knowledge on the use of sport as a conflict resolution tool (Donnelly 2010; Jarvie 2011; Ramsbotham, Miall, and Woodhouse 2011; Cárdenas 2012). This research study heeds the call for enhanced understanding and utilizes a qualitative approach to explore the thinking that underpins Sport for Change (SfC) programs conducted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the United States. Specifically, the study seeks to understand the Theory of Change (ToC) used by SfC actors who design and implement program curricula, posing the questions:

- *How does sport address conflict?* In what ways is sport used to address root causes of conflict? How is conflict perceived and which conflicts are chosen?
- *Why sport as a vehicle for positive change and how does sport facilitate this change?* What is it about sport that makes it a viable option for cultivating positive change? In what ways is sport utilized?

- *How can this knowledge inform the construction of SfC curricula?* What are existing kinds of knowledge that underpin SfC curricula? How can this knowledge be enhanced in relation to addressing conflict?
- *Are SfC actors reflective in their work?* What kinds of information and assumptions are discussed about sport in relation to addressing conflict?

Through an interview-observation-interview methodology, the research explores the logic and knowledge on which such programs are built, as well as the roles of those who design programs (Designers) and those who implement programs (Implementers). In doing so, the research directly addresses the need for increased theoretical understanding in the SfC field (Chen 2018, Whitley et al. 2015; Coalter 2015, 2013; Ricigliano 2012). Specifically, the research helps its actors to enhance program design and evaluation by focusing on a more preliminary yet foundational level: pathways of change, assumptions, and underlying elements of sport and conflict, separately and collectively.

The study further contributes to the field of conflict resolution (CR) in several ways. First, this study builds upon the multi-disciplinary nature of the CR field and expands upon its existing pool of innovative intervention tools with which to respond to conflict. Second, the study enables the field to gain insights into the various perceptions of conflict in use and thereby create an opportunity for reflection, enhancements, and collaborations across disciplines. Third, the research study provides for a richer understanding into ways in which conflict interveners can be attuned to subtle shifts in perception of individuals in conflict situations, thereby capitalizing on opportunities to facilitate positive change in practice.

Background of Problem

Recent high-level support for sport and increased usage is evident in Resolution A/73/L.36 adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in December 2018. The Resolution recognized "sport as an enabler of sustainable development" (UN 2018a, 1) and further reiterated the UN's call for member states to leverage sport to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[1] and work with interested stakeholders, including the sports community, civil society, international organizations, and businesses. Among other points that further advocated the call to leverage sport, the Resolution outlined the following:

> Sports and the arts in particular have the power to change perceptions, prejudices and behaviours, as well as to inspire people, break down racial and political barriers, combat discrimination and defuse conflict. (United Nations 2018, 2).

Resolution A/73/L.36 is among several significant actions taken by this influential entity in regard to sport. In 2001, the United Nations recognized sport as a "human right," "low-cost" and "high-impact" tool in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts, most notably toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The year 2005 was proclaimed as the International Year for Sport and Physical Education to strengthen sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace, and its resolutions, while nine years later, in 2013, it proclaimed April 6th as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (UN 2018a).

[1] The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are 19 goals that serve as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address global challenges, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. For more information, see https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/.

In 2017, the UN created a new partnership with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) under the premise that "the Olympic spirit allows people to be together, from all over the world, to respect each other, to assert the values of tolerance, of mutual understanding that are the basic elements for peace to be possible" (UN News 2018, par. 2). IOC President, Thomas Bach, emphasized that the values of the IOC are in direct alignment with those of the UN:

> This will strengthen the position of sport even more in society and will help sport to fulfill its role as 'an important enabler of sustainable development', as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The direct partnership is fully in line with the UN resolution, which 'supports the independence and autonomy of sport as well as the mission of the IOC in leading the Olympic Movement. (Bolling 2017, par. 4)

The IOC-UN partnership signaled the prolific promotion and advocacy of sport by two influential entities, including increased activity by NGOs. The online web portal, International Platform on Sport for Development and Peace has over 950 registered NGOs in comparison to 176 in 2006 (Levermore 2018; Whitley et al 2019) which is a 439.8% increase in 12 years. Under the belief that sport is a "bridge-building activity and an alternative to violence and destructive conflict" (Ramsbotham, Miall, and Woodhouse 2011, 355), NGOs have created sport-based programs to address a plethora of conflicts (Coalter 2010; Guest 2009; Kidd 2008; Levermore 2008). A recently published review of research on SfC programs indicate a significant focus on addressing social and structural conflict through cultivating individual outcomes, from cognitive and social life skills (Hermens et al. 2017) and general life skills (Langer 2015; Darnell 2010; Kay and Bradbury 2009) to positive youth development outcomes in personal, social, and physical domains (Holt, Deal, Smyth 2016).

In programs with conflict resolution objectives sport is used to "alleviate the tension caused by conflict fought along ethnic lines" (Levermore 2008, 186). The organization Football4Peace, for example, brings Arab and Jewish children together in Israel through football coaching. Sport is further used to facilitate "mutual recognition, to initiate a first step enabling each to discover the other in a human, rather than hateful, light (Bouzou 2010, 156). Peace Players International, with programs operating in and outside of the United States, Middle East, and Europe seeks to achieve this exact goal through the use of basketball as a tool to create "safe and neutral spaces" (Peace Players International 2016). In these spaces, youth are given opportunities to learn to humanize the other and form personal bonds and friendships (Ibid.). Coaches Across Continents is another example of an NGO, utilizing football (otherwise known as soccer) to help former child soldiers learn life skills, health and wellness education, empowerment, and conflict resolution skills. Coaches do so through creating games in safe spaces that intentionally cause frustration and arguments for the players, as a means to practice good communication skills and teambuilding, instead of violence. The role of coaches is recognized to be important in SfC programs as the development of social skills is enhanced when facilitated and modeled by trained leaders (Bailey 2006; Kay 2009). The role of coaches is a component that is explored in this research study.

While NGOs that work to address various kinds of conflict do exist globally, the majority are carried out in the 'Global South' (Schulenkorf, Sherry, Rowe 2016), signifying a gap in research as it relates to data on programs operating in the Global

North, such as the United States. This study fulfills such a gap by focusing its sample on NGOs operating in the United States.

Despite the growth of sport-based initiatives, there remain several additional gaps in research which give further cause to conduct research of the nature undertaken in this study. First, SfC programs operate under the assumption that sport is good or in other words "mythopoeic" (Coalter 2007), an assumption which has led to macro-level claims that are "wrongly generalized" (Coalter 2010, 205). The critique that sport is a positive phenomenon with the ability to create positive change across differences in context and levels of society poses important areas of disconnect. First, it inadvertently identifies sport as a panacea and in doing so implies that conflict is uniform and simplistic. Second, it identifies a lack of attention to the importance of context (i.e. cultural, social, structural). Third, it assumes that individuals' development through sport (a focus highlighted above) can help them to overcome conflict. Although scholars have pointed out that "sport does not, and most likely cannot, usurp the social-political relations and challenges of international development organization, policy, and implementation" (Darnell and Hayhurst 2011, 188), the mythopoeic assumptions and generalized macro-level claims continue to dominate the SfC field.

This has resulted in programs without well-defined ToC that identify the most efficacious ways to promote certain outcomes and impacts (Whitley 2018 quoting Coalter 2015; Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, Smith 2017). Scholars have, therefore, called for a shift toward creating "context specific theories of change…prior to program design, implementation, and evaluation" (Whitley et al. 2015). Unfortunately, the concept of ToC

itself remains underemployed in the sport for change field (Chen 2018, 6); and it is this specific juncture at which this research study seeks to contribute.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to two categories of end users.

1. For scholars and practitioners in the field of conflict resolution, this study:
    a. Contributes to the understanding, and potentially the abilities, of conflict interveners to be more attuned to subtle shifts in perception of individuals in conflict situations, thereby capitalizing on opportunities to facilitate positive change.
    b. Explores the relationship between espoused theories and theory-in-use so as to understand the ways in which theory and practice can connect, and to sensitize interveners' efforts to the role of assumptions and reflective practices in their work.
    c. Expand upon existing frameworks and pedagogy related to addressing conflict, thereby increasing the tools with which conflict resolution practitioners can respond to conflict.
2. For SfC actors who design and implement sport-based programs, this study:
    a. Provides further insight into the assumptions that ground programs' pathway of change, and thereby enhance program design and evaluations.
    b. Expands the knowledge base on programs' ToC so as to advance understanding of how micro level efforts are believed to lead to macro level change.

c. Provides an inter-disciplinary lens to broaden knowledge base regarding context specific ToCs which can serve to bridge micro and macro level efforts.

d. Provides deeper insight into the thought processes and frameworks used by program Designers and Implementers regarding what changes are believed to be occurring at the individual-level.

e. Explores the role of reflection in programs as a means to increase consistencies between Designers and Implementers.

Initial Questions and Motivations

The assumption that individuals can develop and gain skills through sport which enable them to overcome conflict exists even in the film industry. At the age of eight, I became enamored by the 1980s-movie, *American Ninja*, starring a United States Marine who used his karate skills to 'fight' off dangerous encounters and thereby defend the United States against foreign attacks. The Marine, to whom I referred as 'American Joe,' needed only his mental awareness and body as weapons to engage in the martial encounters he faced; encounters from which he would always emerge victorious. These victories would ultimately, as the plots unfolded, have a direct influence in ensuring the safety and interests of the United States and its citizens.

Given my background in the martial arts (to which some might refer as sport), I understand the influence of this assumption on a personal level. Throughout my experiences, I have come to learn that the physical, mental, and spiritual trainings of karate is the vehicle through which I am able to 'touch base' with my inner thoughts,

reflections, and emotions. The kind of awareness that karate fosters has equipped me with the knowledge to consciously guide my actions and control my surroundings. Such an ability has cultivated a sense of empowerment, most especially given that the martial arts principles posit that such learned skills (and empowerment) can be taught to others and thereby develop a mass of responsible citizen in society capable of addressing social and structural conflict.

With this kind of theoretical understanding and practical experiences, I wanted to know if others in the sport realm experienced a similar sense of skills development and empowerment. What was it about sport that enables it to have such profound influence on one's sense of empowerment and agency? What were the guiding principles in other sports? And further, why were people flocking to start (and invest in) sport-based organizations and its interventions in an under-developed field?

In 2010, I helped organize the Sport and Peacebuilding Symposium while working at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) to explore sport in relation to conflict and peace theories, program sustainability, and monitoring and evaluations efforts. While the focus increasingly centered on identifying if 'sport works', I became increasingly focused on exploring the thinking that underpins SfC work and the actors implementing the programs. The latter is fundamentally necessary in order to understand if sport works at all on any level, much less to explore the sustainability of SfC programs or its connection to existing theories. Without exploring efforts which utilize sport at its most basic premise, the risks include misplaced investment of resources in programs founded upon (or purporting) exaggerated, erroneous, and generalized claims that do not

represent reality, particularly when it comes to addressing a complex phenomenon such as conflict.

An exploration into thought processes can be a rather messy endeavor as it involves collecting and sifting through the stories and belief systems that drive practice – how and why sport is used as the vehicle with which to address conflict. However, here is the point at which research is most needed. As evidenced in the stories of the American Ninja movie and personal example provided above, there exists an inherent connection between theory and practice, particularly how each influence (and reaffirms) the other. Specifically, though, the examples highlight how assumptions are used to inspire and bridge micro (individual) and macro levels of change (social, structural).

Through an interview-observation-interview methodology, the research explores the logic and the knowledge on which SfC programs are built, as well as the roles of those who design programs (Designers) and those who implement programs (Implementers). In doing so, the research directly addresses the need for increased theoretical understanding in the SfC field. The research further helps SfC actors to enhance program design and evaluation by focusing on a more preliminary yet foundational level: pathways of change, assumptions, and underlying elements of sport and conflict, separately and collectively.

Chapter Overview

The organization of the dissertation is as follows: Chapter Two examines current literature relevant to understanding the phenomena of conflict and change, ToC in program development, and the SfC field. Chapter Three outlines the research

methodology used and provides the rationale for an iterative design focused on Designers and Implementers of SfC programs. Chapter Four presents findings derived from thematic analysis of data in five parts: Part I explores what sport means; Part II exploring what conflict means; Part III explores curricula of SfC programs; Part IV describes contributions of Implementers to SfC curricula, and Part V explores the art of Implementers through observations. Chapter Five discusses findings in relation to the literature review and method used in this study, and Chapter Six outlines recommendations for further research and practice in the conflict resolution and the SfC field.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This research study explores the thinking behind how and why sport is used to address conflict and create positive change. Specifically, it seeks to understand the following research questions: *How does sport address conflict? Why is sport used as a vehicle for positive change and how does sport facilitate such change? What kinds of knowledge inform the construction of SfC curricula? What are the ways in which SfC actors reflect upon their work?* Four over-arching areas in the literature are significant in understanding how conflict and change are addressed as well as how sport connects within these concepts: the complexity of conflict, significance of ToC toward creating positive change, conflict and change, and sport as a catalyst for change.

The Complexity of Conflict

Conflict is a dynamic phenomenon. It is a universal and multi-dimensional feature of human society with origins in economic differentiation, social change, cultural formation, psychological development and political organization (Ramsbotham et al. 2011, 8). At its most basic, yet by no means simplistic, conflict is the perception of incompatibility or the pursuit of incompatible goals (Galtung 1958). What might seem like a neatly outlined definition of conflict is, however, not a clear representation of the complexity of conflict, its effects, and approaches toward its resolution.

Coined as “old as antiquity” (Scimecca 1993, 391), the study of conflict and how it is understood was born outside of a closed-door laboratory. Conflict was written, and continues to be written, by the happenings of the world (Avruch 2013). Driven by and responding to real-world happenings, scholar-practitioners have produced a plethora of theories and approaches toward research and practice in order to increase the probability of promoting equitable and just systems, of non-violence, and of peace.

As a result, the language and foci of ‘conflict resolution’ have significantly “changed as the field has grown and reacted to often turbulent political change” (Ibid., 10). Much of the work produced has in turn shaped the direction of the field: from conflict regulation to management, then to conflict resolution and to transformation, and finally, to peacebuilding (Ibid., 11). These terms do not reflect a simple issue of semantics, but more so an evolution in the approaches for how to address conflict. Conflict scholar Kevin Avruch highlights that such evolution is grounded in the “moral and political assumptions about the nature of people and the world” (Ibid.).

Such change and diversity is important to consider as it highlights the need to remain aware of novel approaches through which salient conflicts of a particular time can be addressed. Identified as providing “windows into societies and cultures” (Coakley 2015, 11), sport is one such novel approach that is purported to reflect the happenings, and arguably conflicts, of the world. Sport acts as a window through its ability to relate to the social and cultural contexts in which we live, and through providing stories and images that can help to explain and evaluate contexts (i.e. major spheres of life such as family, economy, media, politics, education, religion) (Coakley 2015).

Adopting a conflict resolution lens to the study of sport enables for useful insights into the assumptions which not only drive people and their world, but also into the assumptions surrounding the root causes of conflict as perceived by those affected. This approach amplifies the necessity for a theoretical as well as a practical exploration into how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change; as is the nature of this research study. The insights gained from this study can further supplement certain existing bodies of knowledge on sport which have primarily taken a sociological lens on behavior in terms of the social conditions and cultural contexts in which people live (see Coakley 2015, 2011, 2006; Coalter 2015, 2013, 2010, 2007; Prettyman and Lampman 2011; Giullianotti 2010; Sudgen 2010).

A deeper discussion into the field of conflict resolution demonstrates the breadth and depth of the complexities of conflict at various levels of society. In outlining four eras of the conflict resolution field, Louis Kriesberg (2009) helps to exemplify this point: from preliminary developments (1914-1945) to laying the groundwork (1946-1969), to moving toward expansion and institutionalization (1970-1989), and then toward diffusion and differentiation (1990-2008). These eras are characterized by significant national and international occurrences at multiple levels of society. The periods between World War I (1914-1918) and the end of World War II (1939-1945) witnessed much war and conflict; from economic depression of the 1930s, the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy, the recognition of the totalitarian character of Stalinism in the Soviet Union, as well as the wars in Spain and China. Such occurrences led to the study of violent conflict which included studies of arms races, war frequencies, revolutions, and peacemaking (Ibid., 18).

The role of NGOs and INGOs became pronounced during the periods of 1946-1969 and 1970-1989, as several began to form and respond to different kinds of conflict. Evidenced by the establishment of United Nations (UN), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, these entities as well as governments increasingly began to undertake actions to prevent future wars, create transnational institutions, and foster reconciliation between former enemies (Ibid., 19). Some actions included educational (i.e. health, intercultural) and violence prevention initiatives supported by UNESCO which recognizes sport as an "instrument for promoting peace, as it disregards both geographical borders and social classes" while also promoting "social integration and economic development in different geographical, cultural and political contexts" (UNESCO 2017, par. 1).

Between 1970 and 1989, conflict took different shape. In the United States, it came about in the form of "the civil rights struggle and the women's, student, environmental, anti-Vietnam war, and other social movements," all of which appeared to demonstrate "conflict was a way to advance justice and equality, and improve the human condition" (Kriesberg 2009, 22). Internationally, the United States and the former Soviet Union had reached an arms control agreement, while its diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China had normalized after twenty years of stalemate. Such a normalization was significant for several geopolitical reasons yet more so it was unique given that sport – in the form of 'Ping-Pong diplomacy' – served as a catalyst in the process of creating a space for dialogue where none had previously existed. Speaking to

this, then-United States President, Richard Nixon shared the following: "I was as surprised as I was pleased by this news. I had never expected that the China initiative would come to fruition in the form of a ping-pong team" (Nixon 1978, 548). While some NGOs (and governments) began organizing cultural exchanges between citizens of different nations, other NGOs were founded to "conduct training, consultations, and workshops relating to large-scale conflicts" (Kriesberg 2009, 23).

These real-world examples help to demonstrate a dominant understanding of conflict based upon a "mechanistic and pragmatic understanding that conflict emerges out of competing goals, resources and interests" (Avruch 2013, 5) – key principles that underpin the approaches of conflict regulation and conflict management. Operating upon the assumption that deep causes are "beyond our reach, untouchable, located in human nature or the very nature of the conflict system," both of these approaches adopt the position that conflict is fundamental to society and the international system, and can be managed at best (Ibid.). Conflict regulation and management, therefore, "aims to achieve balance, stability, or deterrent, and not much more" (Ibid., 11).

With the ending of the Cold War in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the global landscape was significantly altered between 1990 to present. Several other significant developments contributed to the new landscape of the era: the rise in global communications, increased economic integration, growing adherence to norms protecting human rights, the increasing number of democratic countries, the growing engagement of women in governance, and an increase in transnational social movements and organizations (Kriesberg 2009, 26). These events led to the development of two

related yet polar perspectives of conflict as a response to state-centered international relations as well as to settlement-oriented mediations. Scholars Roger Fisher and Bill Ury developed an interest-based or principled negotiation which advocated for satisfying interests (over positions) while also improving the relationship between parties in conflict. On the other hand, scholar John Burton advocated for addressing conflict through recognition of the "real or perceived threat to and frustration of basic human needs for survival, dignity, control and identity. These needs, he argued, could never be bargained or negotiated away" (Avruch 2013, 14).

While large-scale conflicts were settled by negotiated agreements, destructive conflict still ensued, evidenced by more recent occurrences such as the September 11, 2001 attacks carried out on the United States by militant group Al Qaeda, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Governments and IGOs were not fully prepared and lacked the capacity to manage the multitude of problems that followed the end of hostilities. They increasingly employed nongovernmental organizations to carry out some of the needed work of humanitarian relief, institution building, protection of human rights, and training in conflict resolution skills" (Kriesberg 2009, 13). True to Avruch's assertion that the world does, indeed, write the field, conflict scholar-practitioners stepped up to the plate. John Lederach (1997), for example, argued for the need to move beyond resolution and toward transformation of the relationship between parties of a conflict. He outlined that the process of transformation – of "building peace" and "sustainable reconciliation" – requires the involvement of elites and top leadership to grassroots levels. Peacebuilding, therefore, involves multi-level structural or systemic change with a focus on fostering

peace within nations internally as opposed to between nations. Such peacebuilding efforts seek to address a conflict's root causes with "morally infused notions of despair, social justice, and oppression" (Avruch 2013, 20) which increases the need for the "adoption of a 'global and multicultural approach', one that is sensitive to cultural context but attuned to global sources of conflict" (Ibid., 26). Although not directly related to peacebuilding, UNESCO's efforts are examples of leveraging sport as a global and multicultural approach. In its goal to advocate for the process of "continuing education and of social and human development" as well as "social inclusion and mutual tolerance", UNESCO supported initiatives which sought to "promote inter-cultural exchange and inter-regional communication between young generations of different cultural backgrounds" through sport (Khawajkie et al. 2002, 11). Yet, as discussed in a subsequent section of this Chapter, SfC research highlights the need to pay more attention to macro level factors when it comes to addressing conflict.

Incorporating a culturally sensitive approach is only one of seven principles outlined by scholars Paul Rogers and Oliver Ramsbotham (1999) that serve to define and distinguish the conflict resolution field. They posit that the field includes efforts to address the root causes of conflict; requires an interdisciplinary effort; requires analysis at multi-levels of society such as individual, group, state and interstate; includes a commitment to the field as both an analytical and normative enterprise; a recognition that conflict and change does not necessarily need to involve violence. And finally, the seventh principle states that the field of conflict resolution can be defined by the value it places for the relationship between theory and practice. By adopting an iterative research

design in this study through conducting interviews and observations, an exploration into insights offered from theory as well as practice is enabled.

With the recurring nature of conflict and its various forms across time, the conceptualization of conflict and the components necessary for its resolution evolved accordingly. These conceptualizations represent consistent efforts as well as the "desire to get deeper into the root causes of the conflict and to induce more profound and sustained changes in the conflict system and the relationship among the conflictant parties" (Avruch 2013, 11). Subsequently, and in response, the number and scope of conflict-related trainings, journals/databases, academic programs, and NGOs working on conflict resolution has increased, many of them applying various methods (Kriesberg 2009, 27). The increase in scholarship and the practice of conflict resolution has prompted the necessity for "communities of inquiry for learning that is public, shared and cumulative." More so, conflict resolution professionals must have the ability to "innovate and adapt to novel and complex contexts" particularly when conflict is fraught with "complex issues, relationships and dynamics that may have no clear precedent" (Pearson d'Estre 2013, 94, 86). It is, therefore, important to understand the assumptions that not only drive people and their world but those with which conflict interventions approach their work.

Given that sport is believed to be a window into society – and its conflicts – a deeper exploration into the role of assumptions in SfC programs will allow for useful insights into the thought processes which influence the beliefs of those affected by conflict and those who seek to intervene in conflict. Particularly at the programmatic

level, assumptions are critical to understanding how change is expected to come about. To this end, the following section will focus on the concept Theory of Change.

Significance of ToC Toward Creating Positive Change

At its core, a ToC is a tool that shows causal links between activities and outcomes in programs in order to explain how and why a desired change is expected to occur. A ToC further helps to unearth the assumptions and indicators which underpin programs. Given that this research study explores the logical underpinnings of how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change, it is essential to understand the literature on ToC for such an endeavor. This section presents a discussion on the emergence of ToC and the role of assumptions.

Emergence of ToC

In the 1970s, there was an increased recognition that development projects seeking to address the poverty gap between the rich and the poor were not creating sustainable social change (James 2011; Weiss 1995). Such a recognition prompted development experts to question the assumptions behind existing ways of thinking (James 2011, 2). During this time, Brazilian educator, Paolo Freire, was advocating for an approach grounded in encouraging people to reflect upon and name their realities. This approach, he argued, was not only empowering but also served as an analysis of the causes of poverty. The Freiran approach is one such example of the different frameworks adopted by development experts of that time period to inform how they thought and worked to create positive social change (James 2011).

As complex programs were designed to tackle complex social conflicts, "comprehensive community initiatives" (Weiss 1995), for example, took off in the 1980s as ventures that sought to address poverty. These efforts incorporated lessons learned from thirty years of public-sector and philanthropic investment in social change (Aspen Institute 2002, 2). However, program evaluators soon "struggled to deal with complex projects as there was no clear framework against which to assess them. It was often not clear what programmes had set out to do and how" (James 2011, 2). As one comprehensive community initiatives (CCI) director stated in 2002:

> My assessment is that much of the CCI work has been opportunistic. We talk about a field, we talk about theories of change, but we don't really have them. There are a lot of us out there experimenting in various ways, trying to find our way in the dark. I'd call where we are: "moving toward a theory of change. (Aspen Institute 2002, 86)

The quote alludes to the importance of specifying ToC for programs that seek to foster change, especially those which are complex and multi-faceted such as those addressing social conflicts. The term 'theory' in this sense is not abstract; instead it is "a concrete statement of plausible, testable pathways of change that can both guide actions and explain their impact. In this way, a theory of change provides a roadmap for action and a framework to chart and monitor progress over time" (Ibid., 87). More explicitly, a ToC articulates "how practitioners believe individual, intergroup, and social/ systemic change happens and how, specifically, their actions will produce positive results" (Shapiro 2005). ToC is concerned with specifying causal processes through which change comes about as a result of a program's strategies and action (Weiss 1972). It is, essentially, a theory of how and why an initiative works (Weiss 1995; Valters 2015).

The ToC concept has roots in a number of disciplines, including environmental and organizational psychology, sociology and political science (Stachowiak 2010). Within the program evaluation arena, methodologist Carol Weiss (1995) generated an increased awareness of the term 'theory of change' as a way to describe the set of assumptions that connect program activities and outcomes and that further explain how steps taken will lead to long-term goals. Weiss argued that being specific about and articulating ToC in programs would strengthen claims to credibility that the intended outcomes were, indeed, achieved while at the same time it would improve a program's internal monitoring and evaluation plans (Weiss 1995). Along the same lines, social development practitioner Cathy James (2011) states that in addition to enabling organizations to develop a clear framework for monitoring and evaluation, ToC fosters "more common understanding, clarity and effectiveness in their approach; and strengthens their partnerships, organisation development and communication" (1).

ToC Versus Logic Model

Although ToC is embraced in programs, it can be confused with other approaches such as logic models (James 2011). Logic models visually demonstrate the basic inputs, outputs, and outcomes of a program such that one could "see at a glance if outcomes are out of sync with inputs and activities" (Clarke and Anderson 2004). Logic models also provide a "clear statement of the overall intent of an intervention as well as useful guidance for implementation and selection of variables for an evaluation" (Rogers 2008, 34). However, they neglect factors that "contribute to observed outcomes, including the implementation context, concurrent programmes and the characteristics of clients"

(Ibid.). Additionally, logic models risk overstating (or neglecting to explain) the causal relationships in an intervention and do not draw on a wide research based theory, particularly as it relates to "human service interventions such as education, drug prevention, family support services and international development" (Ibid., 33).

With logic models, there is also the risk of "goal displacement" (Rogers 2008, 34 quoting Perrin 2003; Winston 1999) where original targets are met even though it "undercuts the actual goals of the intervention" (Rogers 2008, 34). Regardless, Patricia Rogers (2008) asserts that the "anxiety provoked by uncertainty and ambiguity can lead managers and evaluators to seek the reassurance of a simple logic model, even when this is not appropriate" (48).

In contrast, ToC provides descriptions of explicit (espoused theories) and implicit (theories in use) knowledge that help to explain the trajectories, relationships, and interdependencies between how, where, and when change happens (Shapiro 2006). Subsequently, ToC enables for opportunities to reflect on the macro level that underpin design and action, as well as considers and questions whether alternative theories should supersede or take different priorities in various areas of development (James 2011, 5). As an example, an empowerment, rights-based approach may effectively support gender programming but might not be appropriate for climate change, a theory that still requires testing to prove its validity (Ibid.).

In order to avoid confusion, Sue Funnell and Patricia Rogers (2011) advise clarification of terms in conversation and/or evaluations. This study utilizes ToC as "the central processes or drivers by which change comes about for individuals, groups, or

communities" such as psychological, social, physical, and economic processes, and that can be derived from a formal research-based or unstated tacit understanding of how things work (Funnell and Rogers 2011, xix). In interventions that seek to address conflict, articulating such a ToC is useful in several ways as they help to:

- "foster reflective practice and conscious choice among practitioners that expands the range and creativity of intervention options;
- forge stronger links between theory and practice by surfacing the underlying theories of individual, relational and social change that shape practice;
- identify contradictory or competing theories useful in testing the relative validity of different approaches or in differentiating the conditions under which each might be most useful; and
- recognize the shared or complimentary elements of intervention initiatives which can promote cooperation and coordination among programs" (Shapiro 2006, 2).

Indeed, the process of developing ToC in programs which seek to address conflict and create positive change has several important advantages. It allows for the identification of a clearer (and causal) pathway of change which can in turn foster clarity to guide the work of program Designers and Implementers – both of which have fundamentally different roles where the former designs the curricula to be taught while the latter implements them in real time. Ideally, such clarity can be helpful for enhancing communication (i.e. dialogue, debate) while at the time developing cohesiveness between Designer and Implementer role-specific responsibilities.

Designing a Purposeful ToC

A ToC fulfills different purposes, including strategic planning, communication, accountability and learning (Valters 2015) at different levels, including macro, sectoral, organizational and project/program (James, 2011). For example, an organization may use a ToC as a way to communicate its goals to funders and also to promote internal learning on program strategy.

Developing a ToC requires a multi-step backward mapping process. First, program designers identify long-term outcomes through collaborative discussions and in some instances, other stakeholders such as the funders or Implementers (Theory of Change 2019a). Participants design a map of the conditions required to bring about the specified outcomes, which also reflects what is expected to change and for which outcomes the program can be held accountable. The second stage involves outlining immediate and intermediate outcomes at various levels of the program's intended trajectory/change pathway. To do so, program designers continually ask 'what is needed' in order to reach the long-term outcomes and to keep mapping backward while at the same time laying out the rationale (Ibid.). Eventually, a "story the group can agree on" will be created through the mapping (Ibid., par. 2). For those involved in the ToC creation, "debate is often the most valuable component of ToC because they are now jointly defining the expectations, assumptions and features of the change process. ToC participants are required to make explicit, and agree upon, the underlying logic of the initiative which improves the productivity and accountability" (Ibid., par. 2).

Next in the process is to determine the preconditions throughout the change pathway; for each precondition, there is an underlying assumption. For example, if the initial condition is to create a coalition of organizations working to develop employment programs for domestic violence survivors for all women, the assumption is that the program can only effectively work with women who had already begun to stabilize their lives – which support the logic for why a coalition is needed. "Any initiative is only as sound as its assumptions" and yet assumptions are "too often unvoiced or presumed frequently leading to confusion and misunderstanding in the operation and evaluation of the initiative" (Theory of Change 2019b, par. 1). Developing and using ToC, which should be subject to revisions especially in social change initiatives where needs fluctuate, will help to ensure agreement for immediate and future planning (Theory of Change 2019a).

Developing indicators for each outcome is also critical to developing a ToC. This is done by collecting data for each outcome across four components: population, target, threshold and timeline. Toward this aim, ToC Designers can pose guiding questions that explore who is changing, how many are expected to succeed, how much is good enough, and by when does the intended outcome need to happen (Theory of Change 2019c).

The final stage of the ToC process requires Designers to develop interventions that is believed, based upon the backward mapping, to lead to the realization of outcomes. Herein lies an important factor that further highlights the importance of developing ToC when addressing the complex phenomenon of conflict, particularly through the vehicle of sport. Without first identifying, clarifying, and reaching consensus

that guides and coordinates actions of Designers and Implementers, the risk in using sport to do good is that it can backfire. Sport is indeed akin to a double-edged sword, where the possibility of igniting conflict is real and has historical evidence (Cable 1969; Orwell 1994). Therefore, before designing any sport-based intervention, it is critical to first understand how and why sport can serve (if at all) as a global and multicultural vehicle capable of addressing root causes of conflict and cultivating pathways of positive change.

The illustration below is an example of a ToC for a program called "Project Superwoman" that the NGO ActKnowledge created in partnership with the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change (ActKnowledge and Aspen Institute 2003, 12).

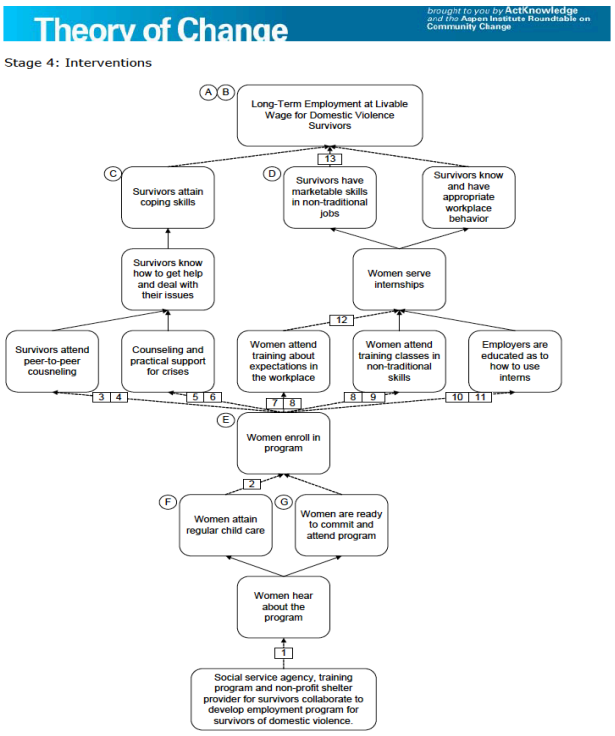

Figure 1 Project Superwoman TOC (ActKnowledge and Aspen Institute 2003, 12)

Along the same procedural line, Funnell and Rogers (2011) assert that a ToC has three components: situational analysis, scoping and focusing, and outcomes chain. To develop a ToC, program designers should begin with an "accurate analysis of the existing situation" which refers to the problem, set of problems, or opportunities that a program is seeking to address as well as the context within which the program operates (Ibid., 151-52). A situation analysis therefore incorporates information about the problem, its causes, and consequences to serve as baseline data for evaluating the continuing need for and relevance/appropriateness of a program. To this aim, baseline data includes the identification of trends and patterns, quantitative and qualitative research data, data from experienced practitioners, and information about the nature and size of the problem.

Funnell and Rogers (2011) suggest three categories upon which a situational analysis should be conducted. The first category relates to asking questions about the nature and extend of the main problem, such as what is the problem, for whom does it exist, and what is the history and future projections. The second category is concerned with causes and contributing factors such as why the problem exists, what are the causes, and what, if any, are the known causal pathways. The third and final category of the situational analysis reviews the consequences. Inquiries about consequences include why the problem should be considered as a problem, what are the consequences for those who are directly and indirectly affected by it, and why this problem (or opportunity) is worth pursuing. While identifying problems and deficits is important, a good situational analysis also reframes the perceived problems as opportunities (Ibid., 154).

Scoping and focusing is the second component. This stage involves identifying the main strategies or policy tools that the program will use, identifying the desired outcomes/conditions that are within the scope or program reach, and third, identifying which other actors are expected to contribute to outcomes that are beyond the focus of the program.

The final component of developing a ToC is the outcomes chain, which represents the "main device for thinking about how the program will function to achieve results and address the situation" (Ibid., 179). Incorporating an outcomes chain avoids an overemphasis on the activities of a program as "proxy measures of outcomes" (Ibid.). To develop an outcomes chain, Designers must first clarify how the programs' desired immediate, intermediate, and ultimate outcomes will contribute to overcoming the problem. Second, pre- and post-conditions should be included so as to demonstrate the way in which key outcomes are achieved and lead toward the ultimate goal. Lastly, the chain must illustrate which activities will be relevant to which outcomes, where gaps exist, and which outcomes are dependent on additional activities or instead depend on the achievement of prior outcomes.

A purposeful ToC requires attention to the culture of the context in which a program is designed and implemented. Theories that focus on the individual as the unit of change, for example, might be unfitting for a high context culture where the focus is in group responsibility and group decision-making. ToCs should therefore be "developed, represented, and not in a formulaic way, but thoughtfully and strategically, in ways that suit the situation" (Funnell and Rogers 2011, xx).

Exploring ToCs used in SfC programs is one key way through which to learn about how and why (if at all) sport connects to the broader situation – the conflict. Understanding the nature of such a connection is important (Nols et al. 2017; Ricigliano 2012; Massey et al. 2015; Lyras and Welty Peachey 2011) given that SfC programs claim that micro level changes (i.e. individual level) will lead to macro level changes (Coakley 2011; Coalter 2013); claims which have yet to be proven and have been criticized as grandiose (Coakley 2010; Whitley, Blom, and Gerstein 2015 quoting Anderson and Olsen, 2003; Reflections of Peace Practice 2009a, 2009b, 2011). While criticism has resulted primarily from monitoring and evaluation efforts that examine the accuracy of claims, this research study takes a different approach in order to understand why such micro-to-macro claims continue to be made by SfC actors. The approach, therefore, lends itself toward exploring conceptualizations of sport, of conflict and change, and of the kinds of knowledge, communications, and assumptions used by Designers and Implementers who leverage sport to address conflict and create positive change.

These questions can be best explored through investigating ToCs used in SfC programs, a tool grounded in causal links and the assumptions which lead to them.

Unearthing Assumptions

The basic idea of a ToC is to make explicit and critically assess assumptions of change processes. An assumption can be understood as "an assertion about the world that underlies the plan/anticipated change process" (Guijt 2013, 1). Within a ToC model, assumptions are the "unproven connections between levels" that explain how and why changes occur in programs (Church and Rogers 2006, 34). They exist in the space

referred to as “black box”, between the activities of a program (inputs) and outcomes (goals) (Ibid., 118).

Assumptions will affect how well outcomes are achieved and they should, therefore, be identified when establishing goals and objectives, and before developing indicators and means for verification (Church and Rogers 2006, 34). Identifying assumptions – at each level of the change trajectory – will assist Designers to develop an understanding of the mechanisms that need to be in place in order to achieve the stated goals. For example, if assumptions are likely to be false, then the goals and objectives may need to be refined.

Although thoughtful identification of assumptions is an essential aspect of a ToC process, it is often done poorly (Guijt 2013; Valters 2015). Oftentimes in efforts to address complex and urgent issues, Designers “gloss” over assumptions (Church and Rogers 2006, 118). Herein lies a few common pitfalls. Designers tend to identify too few or too many assumptions; they focus only on context assumptions while ignoring causal assumptions that explain how something is believed to take place (Guijt 2013); and/or they are seen primarily as a product to be completed at the start of a project and “then to sit gathering dust on a shelf” (Valters 2015, 7).

Marie Guijt (2013) argues that different kinds of assumptions exist. Four categories are important to consider when mapping out how change is believed to happen. The first category of assumptions are those about the *causal links* between outcomes at different levels, and which include four types: operational/implementation which can fall along the lines of assuming that participants will show up for the services;

the second is strategic assumptions/full pathway which assumes that services provided will alter participants' attitudes and consequently will affect their behavior; purpose level are those assumptions which believe that outcomes will enable specific actions on a more macro scale.

The second category of assumptions is the *paradigm or 'world view' assumptions*. These are about the drivers and pathways of change, such as "social change best occurs by civil society demanding and building responsive government" (Ibid., 2). The third category is assumptions about the *belief systems* in society "which inform judgments about what is appropriate and feasible in a specific context" while the fourth category is *operational assumptions* which are those about external contexts such as political stability or freedom of expression (Ibid.).

Assumptions can also be categorized into program and non-program factors (Funnell and Rogers 2011). Program factors are those that are within the control of (or can be influenced) by program funders and staff. These include, among others, certainty and dependability of resources, quality and quantity of activities and service delivery, economical use of available resources, effectiveness of strategic planning and program design processes (includes soundness of data used). In contrast, non-program factors are those that lie beyond the direct control of program staff but that still have impact on outcomes, such as economic/political/industrial climate, and changing nature and scale of the problems addressed by a program. Both program and non-program factors should be considered in relation to the program as a whole and to each specified outcome in the ToC (Ibid.).

Developing a TOC that "speaks closely to the diverging realities" can be a challenging task (Valters 2015, 5). It is, therefore, essential to move beyond explaining the rationale of how change is believed to occur by clearly specifying and assessing assumptions of change processes on each level of the change trajectory (i.e. inputs, outputs, and preconditions). Church and Rogers (2006) advise that those assumptions which could prevent or block a connection between one level in the design and another level are those which will matter the most (35). They suggest the use of the flow chart below in Figure 2 to assist Designers with sifting through assumption to determine the most salient ones that increase the likelihood of achieving outcomes.

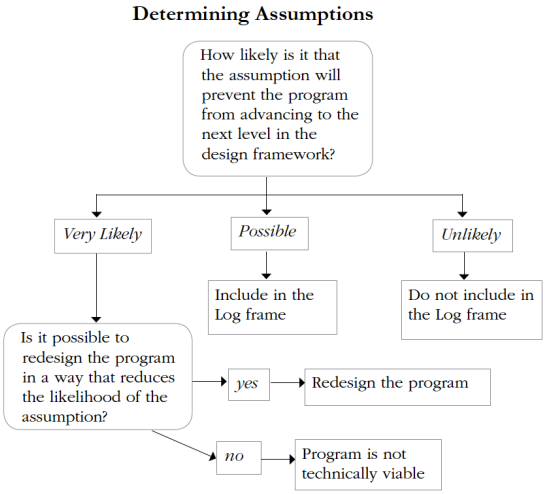

Figure 2 Determining Assumptions flow chart (Church and Rogers 2011, 34)

Identifying assumptions is not only a critical part of ensuring program effectiveness; it is also critical for developing collaborative and cohesive teams (Guijt 2013). Discussions about assumptions will illuminate personal and group values as well

as where they align and differ. Guijt (2013) asserts that "sometimes simply understanding different assumptions is enough to work together well" (3). Identifying assumptions can also improve design and innovation by revealing new avenues, new pathways on which to focus planning efforts. Identifying assumptions can further help to coordinate and focus the actions undertaken by a program. Through exploration of the different ways in which individuals and organizations assume change will take place, program staff can reach shared consensus and understanding of processes which can ultimately drive and coordinate their responsibilities – providing the added advantage of improving practice (Weiss 1995, 71). In contrast, such as in situations where Designers and Implementers' understanding about the theoretical (and tacit) assumptions are not aligned, they may actually be working at cross-purposes and toward "divergent-even conflicting-means and ends" (Ibid., 71) which will further negatively impact evaluation efforts (Ibid., 87). The process of identifying assumptions has several other advantages: it enables program staff to think about their work more deeply in an organic and interactive way; it helps with risk management by honing in on what is needed to achieve or avoid factors along the change pathway; it guides analysis and judgments in evaluation, all of which can consequently increase credibility among stakeholders (James 2011).

Assumptions are critical to the development of ToCs, and in the case of SfC programs, it is even more critical. Researchers in the SfC field have focused on outcomes and impacts rather than the underlying inputs and processes (Ibid., quoting Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, Smith 2017; Cronin 2011; Lyras and Welty Peachey 2011). They argue further that without clarification of assumptions, SfC programs are "magical

black boxes whose inputs and processes are presumed" (Whitley 2018, 1 quoting Scriven 1994) without actually understanding why specific outcomes and impacts are (not) fulfilled (Ibid., quoting Coalter 2013; Weiss 1995).

Whitley (2018) offers a succinct assertion that until "theory, research, and praxis intentionally focus on this magical 'black box', the field of SDP will be limited" (1). Utilizing a theory and practice research design in this study is a step in the necessary direction given that, among other related factors, assumptions of Designers responsible for creating curricula as well as those harbored by Implementers responsible for applying curricula in real time are explored. Such an endeavor fulfills a direct need of the SfC field.

Guiding Principles of a Good ToC

Developing a ToC is one matter, while developing a good ToC that captures how and why a change is believed to occur is another matter. At the base of every good ToC is the stories that people tell about how problems arise and how they can be solved (Weiss 1995); stories which can be teased out through honing in on questions regarding on-the-ground realities and expanding out on the bigger picture questions (Wigboldus and Brouwers 2011, 8).

Three attributes have been identified to explain what is a good ToC. First, it should be *plausible* in that "evidence and common sense" suggest that the identified activities will, indeed, lead to desired outcomes (Connell and Kubisch 1998, 3). Second, the ToC should be *doable*, meaning that it needs to be grounded in the availability of "economic, technical, political, institutional, and human resources" in order to carry out

the initiative (Ibid.). Third, and finally, a ToC should be *testable* by being "specific and complete enough for an evaluator to track its progress in credible and useful ways" (Ibid.).

In addition to plausibility, do-ability, and testability attributes of a good ToC, Valters (2015) argues for four principles that enable the free flow of creativity (versus prescription) and that aid in identifying the implicit and explicit 'stories' of how problems arise and how they can be solved. These inter-looping principles are outlined below:

Principle 1: Focus on process: Focus on process means to draw attention to the "oft-forgotten assumptions linking project activities and outcomes" while also encouraging a 'learning process' that is flexible and adaptive (Valters 2015, 7 quoting Korten 1980). For example, information will unfold to "confirm or challenge assumptions in different contexts" (Valters 2015, 7) and program designers must be prepared to respond accordingly to changes in local context, problems faced, engagements with key actors. Faustino and Booth (2014) suggest the use of basic timeline documents to capture learning processes as well as to provide evidence of learning for donors. They also point out the importance of creating a number of time-specific ToCs that "instills the practice and discipline of questioning everything," makes thinking explicit so as to promote a common understanding of current ideas among program staff, and helps to explain the logic of thinking to others (Ibid., 17).

Principle 2: Prioritize learning: In order to prioritize learning, ToCs must not "fall into the trap of creating policy-based evidence rather than evidence-based policy.

This requires a focus on searching rather than validation – moving away from looking to match theories to donor narratives and exploring change in ways embedded in local contexts" (Valters 2015, 8). Those involved in development of ToC should, therefore, focus on asking question to explore from *what* they are learning (i.e. financially accountable, improving operations, readjusting strategy, understanding the context); from *whom* they are learning (i.e. front-line implementers); and the *kind* of learning (i.e. engaging in double-loop learning through making explicit and critically assessing assumptions) (Ibid.).

Principle 3: Be locally led: "One of the dangers with a Theory of Change approach is that it remains a topdown process, imposed by a narrow group within organisations or programmes and/or excluding the input and views of beneficiaries" (Ibid., 10). To avoid this pitfall, program staff should remain vigilant to ground causal assumptions in local realities (versus in donor narratives) through engaging local partners/beneficiaries in open discussions and debates using local language (i.e. local culture). A locally-grounded ToC that has identified the salient issues can be "used as a stick with which to beat donors, rather than the other way around" (Ibid.)

Principle 4: Think compass, not map: Given that social change is complex, it is oftentimes seen as not being "operationally digestible with the implicit assumption that it must be fought with more complexity" (Ibid., 11). But this is not necessarily the best approach; one should adopt a compass-like perspective to test out hypotheses about how change will happen instead of mapping out a grand design intervention. Valters (2015) suggests that a compass perspective can guide efforts toward certain levels of a ToC

about which more is known and where it may "make sense to experiment and to articulate multiple theories."

Increasing Demand for Use of ToC

The above guidelines can help Designers to develop a good ToC that is plausible, doable, testable, as well as process and learning oriented, locally led and focused on honing efforts on appropriately informed levels of a change pathway. However, clearly articulating ToC can be challenging due to the variations and inconsistencies within programs (Shapiro 2005).

For one, practitioners often interpret a program ToC differently which leads to variations in program implementation. Secondly, there are often inconsistencies or incongruities between what practitioners say they do (*espoused theory*) and what they actually do (*theory-in-use*); two concepts which will be explained in more detail in a subsequent section of this Chapter. Third, the focus tends to be on "what works" rather than aligning intervention design with one particular ToC (Ibid.). These three tensions – variations in program implementation, espoused theory and theory in use, and intervention design – are areas of exploration that the interview-observation-interview research design of this study enables in the aim to understand how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change.

As a discourse, ToC has become pervasive such that it is standard to directly inquire about a program's ToC (Valters 2015). This is due to increased interest in ToC processes particularly among international NGOs in the North and other developed countries (James 2011, 2). Specifically, such an interest stems from:

- A dissatisfaction with logical frameworks in planning complex interventions;
- Designers reflecting upon their role in the change process as a part of the larger systemic approach;
- Internal monitoring and evaluation processes of organizations which have led to doubt about the impact of their programs;
- Increased demand from funders to demonstrate impact on micro and macro levels;
- A recognition that programs are more activity- versus change-focused;
- A recognition that programs need to better focus priorities so as to avoid undertaking too many efforts. (James 2011, 2)

Increased interest in ToCs is a positive development. Ilana Shapiro (2005) highlights the significant benefits that result from understanding and articulating ToCs. She argues that it enables programs to "identify contradictory or competing assumptions and theories useful in testing the relative validity of different approaches or in differentiating the conditions under which each might be most useful" (Ibid.). Articulating well-thought out ToCs can also foster cooperation and coordination among programs and approaches; foster stronger links between theory and practice by surfacing underlying theories of individual, relational, and social change that shape practice; and relate often disconnected discourse and knowledge, such as between academic disciplines, scholars and practitioners.

Over the past 25 years the formation of several entities focused on developing the ToC approach has also increased the rising interest levels. Notably, the Aspen Research Institute's Roundtable on Community Change collaborated with ActKnowledge, an

independent research and capacity building organization to produce the first ToC guidelines. Today, ActKnowledge (n.d.a) identifies itself as a "social enterprise that connects social change practice with rigorous study of how and why initiatives work" (par. 1). Leveraging the capabilities of technology, ActKnowledge developed Theory of Change Online (TOCO), the "only web-based software" that enables Designers to create and edit a ToC while also learning the concepts of ToC, capturing outcomes, indicators, rationales, and assumptions in an interactive visual platform (ActKnowledge n.d.b, par. 1). The TOCO software has been selected as the ToC analysis tool in the Sustainable Development Goals Toolkit hosted by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Center for Theory of Change is another example. It is a non-profit organization "established to promote quality standards and best practice for the development and implementation of Theory of Change, with a particular focus on its use and application in the areas of international development, sustainability, education, human rights and social change" (Theory of Change 2019e, par. 3). Other examples include 12Manage, an online site that offers descriptions of models and theories organized into 12 categories such as communication and skills, knowledge and intangibles, leadership, and ethics and responsibility, while Beyond Intractability offers knowledge based essays by experts on ToC as they relate to addressing conflict (Funnell and Rogers 320).

Since the 1990s when the term ToC gained more broad recognition, its use as a specific approach or tool has evolved (James 2011, 2). Beginning with a focus on

identifying the assumptions which serve to outline conditions that lead to program outcomes, the focus now incorporates an emphasis on carving out "a space for genuine critical reflection" (Valters 2015, 20). While exploring ToC is, in and of itself, an on-going process of reflection, it also represents a tool through which interveners' can reflect upon their roles and expand the range and creativity of intervention options (James 2011; Shapiro 2005).

This transition is fitting given the changing nature and diversity of conflict across the factor of time. Such change and diversity is important as it highlights the need to remain aware of novel approaches through which salient conflicts of a particular time can be addressed. Engaging in spaces that enable reflection is one way in which Designers and Implementers can examine and discuss approaches (as well as assumptions) toward addressing conflict. In order to understand the ways in which SfC Designers and Implementers partake in reflection as it relates to their work (i.e. process of identifying pathways of change and assumptions), a component of this research study explores what is said and what is done in regard to using sport to address conflict.

Given so, it is important to delve into the relevant literatures on the practice of reflection, specifically through the lens of espoused theory (what is said) and theory-in-use (what is done).

Understanding What is Said and What is Done

In the goal to gain deeper understanding of how and why sport is used as a vehicle through which to address conflict and create positive change, several areas are explored. The thinking of Designers and Implementers' about conflict and sport is examined as it

relates to underpinning the design of interventions (i.e. curricula) that are believed to foster positive change. To supplement insights gained through such an exploration, the actions of Implementers will be observed as a means to learn about any (in)consistencies between what is said to occur and what occurs in the implementation of SfC programs. Such insights will help to access additional information about the kinds of assumptions that drive beliefs and actions as well as how decisions are made about the ways in which action influences curricula design and implementation.

The research design of this study, therefore, requires an understanding of the practice of reflection, specifically through the lens of espoused theory (what is said) and theory-in-use (what is done). Following is a discussion on these topics.

Reflection

A necessary component of reflective practice[2], reflection is a process that yields "multiple meanings which range from the idea of professionals engaging in solitary introspection to that of engaging in critical dialogue with others" (Findlay 2008). Continuous learning through and from experiences with the goal of gaining new insights of self and/or practice are key elements residing at the core of reflection (Mezirow 1981; Jarvis 1992; Freshwater and Johns 1998).

Several scholars have contributed to the scholarship on reflection. For John Dewey (1933), reflection was a means toward learning and the central challenge was learning how to think. To think meant to practice inquiry which involved a process deeper than simply pondering about things; reflection involved an "active, persistent, and

[2] Reflective practice is a form of "meaning making" attempting to make sense of the world around us. See Reflections on Reflective Practice by Sandra Cheldelin, January Makamba, and Wallace Warfield (2004).

careful consideration of any belief of supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends" (Ibid., 3-16).

While Dewey was most concerned with the challenges of learning how to think, Donald Schön (1983) was focused on understanding the place of practice within professional learning and technical rational philosophy. Schön wanted to know how professionals think in the moment and how this process contributes to doing and acting. To highlight these connections, he coined the terms *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action*, undertakings which enable one to engage in continuous learning during practice and about practice.

Schön believed that the professional's creative and idiosyncratic response to unexpected and puzzling problems of practice was at the core of professional practice. Because of this belief, he asserted that fundamental assumptions underlying professional practice and practice education – "technical rationality" – must be reconsidered. For Schön, technical rationality asserts that knowledge for practice is created through research, disseminated and incorporated in professional education, and applied more or less directly to practice. Professional education, stemming from this epistemology, did not and could not prepare practitioners to always know what to do in practice prior to entering into it.

The concept of tacit knowledge, a term coined by scientist and philosopher Michael Polanyi (1958) is fundamental at this juncture. Polanyi asserted that "we can know more than we can tell" (Polyani 1966, 4) in his argument that there exists a kind of knowledge outside of explicit knowledge gained from technical rationality which cannot

be easily articulated or accessed. Examples of tacit knowledge is skills, ideas and experiences which are primarily intuitive and acquired through practical experience (versus formal education, logical deduction) (Polyani 1958). Keith Goffin and Ursula Koners (2011) suggest that transfer of tacit knowledge requires extensive personal contact, regular interaction, and trust.

Herein lies the importance of incorporating observations in a research study of SfC programs that seek to address conflict and create positive change. As mentioned earlier, micro-to-macro level claims by SfC actors about the effects of their programs continue to be made despite criticisms by scholars in the SfC field. Such a disconnect highlights the need to explore the knowledge of Implementers – the tacit knowledge – such that their uniquely positioned experiences might shed insights which limit the disconnect in how micro level changes are believed to lead to macro level positive change.

The Significance of Espoused Theory and Theory-in-Use

Chris Argyris and Schön (1974) assert that people hold maps in their heads about how to plan, implement and review their actions. These maps, however, may not be consistent with the worldviews under which people believe that they are acting. Argyris and Schön suggest that there is a theory consistent with what people say, as well as a theory consistent with what people do – inconsistencies of which they may not even be aware (Argyris, 1980). The distinction is therefore not between "theory and action but between two different *theories of action*" (Argyris, Putnam and McLain Smith 1985, 82) which is argued to determine all deliberate human behavior. In this light, an *espoused*

theory is the world view and values which people believe their behavior is based on while *theory-in-use* is the world view and values implied by their behavior.

Argyris and Schön explore the question of how people can effectively manage their behavior if they are unaware of the theories that drive their action. Argyris (1980) suggests that effectiveness results from developing a match between espoused theory and theory-in-use. Two models in particular were developed to explain the processes which create and maintain a theory-in-use, and to reflect upon (i.e. remain aware of) the difference from the espoused theory.

The first model outlines a linear trajectory which contains governing variables (values the person is trying to keep within a situation), action strategies (those used to keep governing variables within a situation), and intended and unintended consequences (those believed to result). In other words, and as applicable to this research study, the governing variables would be assumptions about conflict and sport held by Designers and Implementers while the action strategy would be the vehicle of sport.

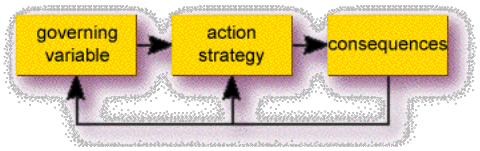

Figure 3 Developing Theory-in-use (Argyris and Schön 1974)

The realization of intended consequences using the strategy employed suggests a match between intention and outcome, and therefore confirmation of the theory-in-use. SfC programs purport the realization of intended consequences in their belief that micro levels changes (i.e. those cultivated in the attitudes and behaviors of individuals) matches the

programs' intended consequences that changes empower individuals to overcome macro level conflict (i.e. structural conflict).

If resulting consequences are unintended and counterproductive to satisfying governing values, then there is a mismatch between intention and outcome. Argyris and Schön (1974) offer that two kinds of responses can be employed to address the mismatch and satisfy the governing variables: single-loop learning and double-loop learning. The former focuses on the changing action strategy while the latter, double-loop learning focuses on questioning the governing values (i.e. assumptions) and changing or adjusting them accordingly. Double-loop learning is seen as the more effective way of making informed decisions about the ways in which action is designed and implemented (Argyris 1974). The illustration below outlines Argyris and Schön's second model:

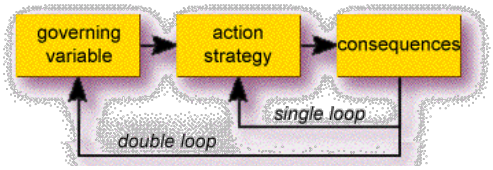

Figure 4 Single-loop versus Double-loop learning (Argyris and Schön 1974)

Certain characteristics of theory-in-use have been identified to promote single-loop and double-loop approaches and they are depicted the following chart:

Table 1 Characteristics of Theory-in-use (Argyris, Putnam, and McLain Smith 1985, 89)

Characteristics of Theory-in-use		
	Model I (Single-loop)	Model II (Double-loop)
	• Achieve purpose as defined	• Utilizes valid/complete

Governing Values	• Primacy for winning • Suppress negative feelings • Emphasize rationality	information (includes affective) • Free and informed choice • Internal commitment
Primary Action Strategies	• Control environment and task unilaterally • Protect self and others unilaterally	• Sharing control • Participation in design and implementation of action
Consequences	• Defensive relationships • Low freedom of choice Reduced production of valid information • Limited public testing of ideas	• Minimally defensive relationships • High freedom of choice

In his research, Argyris has found that most people hold espoused theories which are consistent with Model II, while their theory-in-use is consistent with Model I (Ibid.). This demonstrates a disconnect between what people believe they are doing/what they say and what they do in practice. Reflecting upon and understanding the assumptions that drive action are essential for improving effectiveness, particularly with respect to interventions that seeks to address complex phenomena, such as conflict.

In light of scholarly-based criticism on claims about what SfC programs purport to achieve, it is important to explore several related components: the pathways of change used in programs (ToC), the assumptions that drive Designers' and Implementers role-specific tasks, the consistencies or lack thereof between what is said/believed to occur and what is done, and the kinds of reflective-based responses employed (single-loop, double-loop) in their work to address conflict and create positive change.

Conflict and Change

The development of ToC is necessary for any program that seeks to address complex phenomena, such as conflict and positive change. Its development requires the articulation of assumptions that underpin how and why a desired change is believed to occur. In doing so, it articulates the logical and causal links between inputs and outcomes. An equally important part of the ToC, however, is for those involved in the design of the intervention to ground their beliefs and opinions in wider research-based theories so as to avoid presenting implausible solutions (Funnell and Rogers 2011, 319). Research-based theories have great significance in that they provide a point of reference or "templates...through which questions can be raised about the adequacy of ways in which a program is being conceptualized" (Ibid.). Given that this study explores the thinking of SfC Designers and Implementers including the kinds of knowledge that underpin their logic and beliefs about conflict and change, it is necessary to engage with the relevant literatures on the latter.

Analysis of Conflict

Conflict, as presented in earlier, is fundamentally understood as having or perceiving an incompatibility of goals. While approaches toward addressing conflict and creating change may differ, conflict is often described as a vehicle for positive social change within the conflict resolution field (Pruitt and Kim 2004). Conflict scholar Illana Shapiro (2006) highlights the work of several scholars who posit that if addressed constructively, "conflict can create positive change in individuals' perceptions and behaviors (Bush and Folger 1996; Lederach and Maiese 2003), in relationships between

parties (Bush and Folger 1996; Assefa 1993) and in political, social and economic structures (Dukes 1997; Rupesinghe 1995)" (4). For SfC programs, such information is critical to know and utilize given that the ways in which conflict is addressed can serve to negatively exacerbate or lead toward positive change.

Charles Webel and Johan Galtung (2007) proposed that conflict is seen as having three components: attitudes, behaviors, and contradictions/situation. The outcome of a conflict, whether constructive or peaceful, depends mainly on behavior (what is visible) and is influenced by the attitudes toward others. Conflict scholar Christopher Mitchell (2005) asserts that this model, referred to as the ABC Triangle originally developed by Galtung (1958) can be used to explore the question of what can change in the basic structure of any conflict. Mitchell explains that conflict situations arise in societies because of some mismatch between social values and the social structure of that society, such as the distribution of political, economic, and social goods. "The formation of a situation of goal incompatibility (a conflict *situation*) gives rise to adversaries' conflict *behavior* in order to achieve their (apparently incompatible) goals, plus a related set of perceptions and *attitudes* about themselves, the Other(s) and "third" parties affected or affecting the relationship of conflict" (Mitchell 2005, 8).

All four components – attitudes, behaviors, situation, social structure/values – interact over time and are changed through their interactions. For example, being the target of violence (behavior) can instigate retaliatory attitudes as one's psychological state is affected by the violence. At the same time, an attitude that dehumanizes the

‘Other’ can produce justification for escalating the violence which in turn affects the situation and underlying social structure.

Utilizing the ABC Triangle helps to categorize the types of changes that can take place in a conflict as well as to identify potential openings for an intervention (Mitchell 2005). Identification can vary based on the lens through which conflict and change are viewed. For example, one approach is that changes in perception or goals of the parties in conflict will lead to change, while another (i.e. by commitment theorists) is that changes in behavior lead to new attitudes and perceptions (Kiesler 1971).

There is, however, more elements of which to be cognizant in our understanding of conflict, change and its complexities. Webel and Galtung (2007) identify that the components of attitudes, behavior, and situation are underpinned by a deeper, subconscious layer of assumptions that informs each at the conscious level. It is the sub-conscious level of assumptions that further serve as the “raw material” for the dynamics of conflict escalation which is an important characteristic of change (Ibid., 133). The ABC Triangle is therefore depicted in the following way:

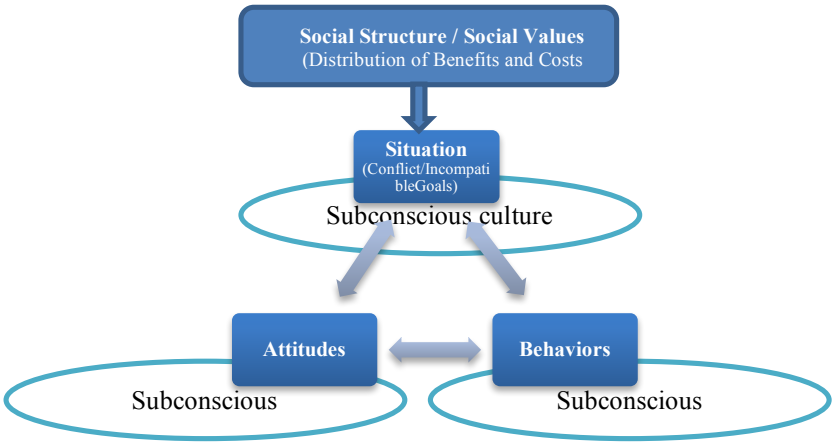

Figure 5 ABC Triangle with subconscious assumptions (Webel and Galtung 2007)

The element of assumptions is not only a fundamental component of ToCs but it is also a key piece of theorizing and analyzing micro-level factors (attitudes, behaviors) of a conflict as they relate to broader macro levels (situation, social structure/social values). Herein lies further grounds for incorporating a focus on the thinking (i.e. assumptions) of Designers and Implementers who seek to address conflict and create positive change through sport. In order to understand how and why SfC Designers and Implementers are utilizing sport in relation to conflict and change, it is necessary to understand how their assumptions relate (if at all) to what is known about conflict and change, its analysis and approaches toward resolution.

Deep Structure

Webel and Galtung (2007) also made reference to "deep structure" which is the "pattern of relations between segments of the society – between the old and the young, men and women, races and ethnicities, between powerful and powerless, along every social cleavage" (132). It can exist in every aspect of society such as family, work, and government. While deep structure is ubiquitous, it is neither good nor bad. However, deep structure that holds an asymmetry of power among segments of society and that violates the basic needs of others is structurally violent because it is linked with discrimination and exploitation (Ibid.)

As a way to capture the levels within a deep structure, conflict theorist Maire Dugan (1996) developed a "nested theory" of conflict. Using this model, conflict could be viewed and analyzed at multiple level(s): issue-specific, the relationship, the subsystem, and/or the system. For example, a conflict intervener might not be able to

address racism (structural violence) across the United States (system level) but he/she could begin this work at other levels. Instead, the conflict intervener could address incidences of physical fights between youth from two different races (issue-specific) at a local high school (subsystem level) by working alongside students and school teachers and administrators to explore the nature and the sources of the incidences. To do so would involve each representative examining the issue, the relationships, and the structural situation in the school in order to change the relationships of those involved in the altercations.

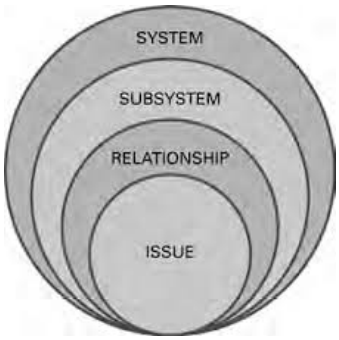

Figure 6 Maire Dugan Nested Theory of Conflict

Structural violence can come in various forms, such as scarcity and lack of access to resources (Coser 1956) to basic human needs (Burton 1990), and to identity (Hancock 2003). When resources (i.e. land, oil, water, power) that had increased the sense of security become scarce, then the goal of incompatibility among sectors of society tends to increase (Mitchell 2005, 6). Conflict then takes the form of struggles which aim to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals (Coser 1956, 8) and which ultimately produces "spasms of violence and counter-violence" (Mitchell 2005, 6).

Scarcity in identity can also be a neglected source of conflict. Landon Hancock (2003) posits that limited identities which are acceptable and to which people in a particular society belong can be problematic. For example, one could identify as either British-Protestant-Unionist or Irish-Catholic-Nationalist until the identity of being "European" became possible as a result of British and Irish membership into the European Union (Ibid.).

Basic Human Needs

The salience of basic human needs rose out of a response to address the inadequacy of two general theories of conflict that were used to understand and resolve social and political changes which took place from the end of World War II until the late 1970s (Rubenstein 2001). These were conservative *personalism* and *liberal situationalism*. The former posits that human beings are driven to engage in violent conflict by innate aggressive instincts and that the environment simply provides a context for activating their internally generated conflictual thoughts and activities. This represented an inwardly driven model. The latter theory, liberal situationalism suggested that conflict behaviors could be altered by adjusting the external situation – representing an outwardly determined model. While the modification of behavior was a key element of both models, advocates of each believed in different combinations of threats (pain) and rewards (positive reinforcements) to respond to conflict (Rubenstein 2001). They did, however, agree on the grounds of political realism which viewed political actors as rational power-seekers who sought control of individual and group interests (Rubenstein 2001). Such control could be exercised through means that decrease people's access to

ways of being, to knowledge, and to interactions with others; means that are characteristic of violent deep structures as exemplified in Galtung's PSFM Syndrome (Penetration, Segmentation, Fragmentation, and Marginalization) (Webel and Galtung 2007, 132 quoting Galtung 1996). The counter to violent deep structure, stated Galtung, is a peaceful deep structure where penetration is changed to autonomy, segmentation to integration, fragmentation to solidarity, and marginalization to participation (Ibid.)

Galtung and Burton (1990) were among the scholars who argued that conservative personalism and liberal situationalism paradigms were both elitist in that they assumed people could be managed or controlled; paradigms that in practice translated into the use of sticks instead of positive reinforcements (Rubenstein 2001). This is the juncture at which Galtung argued the importance of fulfilling four basic human needs that require no hierarchy, a distinct difference between the hierarchy of needs proposed by Karl Max and Abraham Maslow (Webel and Galtung 2007 quoting Galtung 1996). He presented human needs as being "*survival*, as opposed to death; *well-being* which refers to what we need to live from; such as food, clothes, shelter, access to a healthcare system, access to an educational system; *identity* which means a sense of life, something to live for, and not only to live from; and *freedom*, meaning having equal choices. These basic human needs are what define us as human beings" (Webel and Galtung 2007).

Similarly, Burton (1990) argued that universal needs of human beings must be fulfilled in order to prevent or resolve conflicts. These are needs for consistency of response, stimulation, security, recognition, justice, rationality and control. According to

him, the most salient need to understand a social conflict is identity, recognition, security and personal development, none of which could be negotiated away. These needs, Burton posited, are primordial and not socially constructed values based upon the cultural ethos of groups.

And yet, culture, that 'something' which all humans (and structures) possess is what defines needs amongst and within individuals and groups (Avruch 1998). To presume that basic needs are homogenous, uniformly distributed, single-level, customary, and stable across time is an erroneous assumption; one that falls prey to an inadequate understanding about the role of culture in conflict (Ibid.). Culture is, Avruch argues, a "derivative of individual experience, something learned or created by individuals themselves or passed on to them socially by contemporaries or ancestors (Ibid., 5).

Avruch is clear in asserting that culture does not and cannot cause conflict (Ibid., 19). Its representations such as images and schemas can, however, help to predict behaviors which can be utilized as knowledge for conflict interventions. Cultural representations are internalized by individuals, albeit not equally or at the same level, and these internalized, "invested with emotion" representations can instigate behavior by being connected to desirable goals (Ibid., 19). "The more deeply internalized and affectively loaded, the more certain images or schemas are able to motivate action. This is the proper sense in which culture is causal" (Ibid.). Culture is, therefore, something that should not be ignored when addressing conflict and change.

One of the strengths of sport is believed to be its capacity to "bring people together from different cultural backgrounds" (SDP IWG 2008, 214) as in the case of SfC

programs that utilize sport as a "positive vehicle for addressing issues of social inclusion for asylum seekers and refugees" (Ibid.). A study of several cases conducted in the United Kingdom found that in order for sport-based programs that convene cultural groups to successfully foster social inclusion, participants "must be challenged when they engage in unacceptable behaviour. If unacceptable behaviour is not challenged, opportunities to develop positive attitudes toward people from other cultures are undermined" (Ibid.). Understanding more acutely the role of culture will expand the ways in which sport can be used by those who design and implementer SfC programs to address deep, affectively internalized cultural representations that drive conflicting-prone actions in individuals.

The ways in which conflict is understood and analyzed through frameworks that incorporate root causes of conflict is pivotal when it comes to designing curricula that can appropriately, and effectively, lead to resolution. Such information, grounded in research developments can lead to questions about the "adequacy of ways in which a program is being conceptualized" (Funnell and Rogers 2011, 319). In the case of designing SfC intervention programs, this is an important endeavor as research provides a theoretical underpinning upon which SfC-based experiences from practice can later confirm, revise, and/or suggest new directions for further knowledge to be developed. Such a process is further achieved through making "explicit" (Shapiro 2006, 2) the ToCs that guide existing conflict interventions; another key task of this research study.

Through conducting interviews and observations that explore the kinds of knowledge which underpin SfC curricula, this study provides a timely opportunity to

connect insights from theory and practice in light of criticism that the SfC field is limited in theory development, and further in need of integration across disciplines (Whitley 2018, 5). This study will thereby contribute to the enhancement of knowledge in theory and practice while at the same time bridge them across the conflict resolution field.

Specifically, the majority of SfC programs have based their work at the individual level, claiming that positive changes at this level will empower and enable individuals to overcome structural conflict (Coakley 2011), specifically by developing human (confidence, skills, education) and social capital (belonging to community, local identity, norms of trust) (SDP IWG 2008, 212). Such claims necessitate the need for exploring how conflict is conceptualized, how it is analyzed, as well as how and why sport is believed to be an appropriate vehicle for addressing sources which have led to conflict in the first place.

Processes of Change

In any endeavor that addresses conflict, it is necessary to consider processes of change given that what happens to one can influence the other. Conflict and change are in essence, teammates. This study, therefore, engages the literature on processes which foster change in the aim to understand how conflict can be addressed and positive change can be fostered through the use of sport.

Mitchell (2005) identifies three aspects of change that are important in its conflict generating effects. The first is the *nature of change* which gives rise to goal incompatibility. The second is *intensity* which relates to the extensiveness of the change on those affected, while *rapidity* relates to how rapidly change came about, while the

third aspect is (Ibid.). Mitchell identifies five qualities of change that are likely to have the most effect on generating or modifying protracted conflicts: *major* changes – large in scope and intensity; s*udden* changes – taking place abruptly; *unexpected* change – with no prior indication, warning or time to prepare; *rapid* changes – taking place over a short time period; *irreversible* changes – with no way of returning to the status quo (9).

Kurt Lewin (1947) argues that the process of change in individuals and social systems has three components: unfreezing, movement, and refreezing. Lewin states that the first step toward change in *unfreezing*, or developing an openness toward something different than the existing condition. Employing strategies that increase motivation is one example of helping to create openness. Once this is realized, action is required to generate *movement* to a new level. Oftentimes both steps are met with resistance, which can be understood as the "mobilization of energy to protect the status quo in the face of a real or perceived threat to it" (Marcus 2006, 439). The third step in the process of creating change is *refreezing* which involves establishing actions or processes that support a new level of behavior. New processes or standards are developed at this stage in order to ensure that new behaviors "stick" (Ibid., 440). Mitchell (2005) suggests that basic examples of new processes could be to change leaders, change the leaders' and followers' minds, and change existing strategies, policies, environments. Any effort to bring about change should, however, be aimed toward fostering a sense of commitment which can be understood as being visible (to oneself and others), as irrevocable, and as undertaken by choice. The latter component – choice – is a key to avoiding compliance and instead ensuring a pathway toward change (Marcus 2006, 440).

Conflict scholar Lederach (2003) argues for change that leads toward "transformation" and not just the 'resolution' of incompatible goals. He posits that while resolution focuses on bringing painful and undesired events or issues to an end, conflict transformation takes the added step to "form" something that is desired and that fosters positive growth. Forming something new requires interveners to look at the issue (content), then to the relationships surrounding the issue (context), and finally back at the issue from a broader viewpoint (structure) in the aim to create constructive change processes and solutions. Change is, therefore, understood both at immediate and broader levels.

Lederach (2003) offers the "Change as a Circle" model to capture change with respect to how it might feel when parties involved are heavily invested in the desired goals and/or are in the middle of a conflict. At times one feels as if things are moving forward toward the goals, other times it may feel as if things are moving backward and undoing what has already been done. One may also feel as if an impasse has been reached, or that things have collapsed. These stages help to highlight that "change encompasses different sets of patterns and directions as part of the whole" (Ibid., 43).

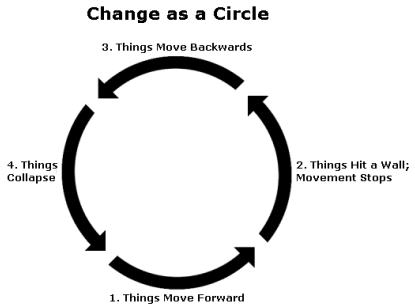

Figure 7 Change as a Circle (Lederach 2003)

Using the circle in a counter-clockwise manner provides a cautionary guide and the opportunity to analyze intervention efforts. For example, if one moves forward too fast, things can collapse; or hitting a wall can provide a "reality check" (Ibid.). More specifically, efforts should be analyzed within four categories: *personal* (minimize destructive effects of conflict, maximize potential for individual growth); *relational* (minimize poor communication, maximize understanding); *structural* (address root causes of conflict, maximize non-violent mechanisms and participant involvement); and *cultural* (maximize understanding of cultural patterns) (Ibid., 23). Similar to Dugan's model of nested conflict, conflict transformation views conflict not in isolation but rather as embedded in the "web and system of relational patterns" (Ibid., 30).

Most specifically, research-based theories on processes of change are important for this research study given that they provide templates of analysis which not only outline relevant components of change but they do so in connection to different levels of analysis, such as from individual to structural. Indeed, conflict and changed-based templates that allow for micro-macro levels of analysis have been identified as a pressing gap in the SfC field (Ricigliano 2012; Massey et al. 2015; Nols et al. 2017 quoting Schulenkorf et al., 2016; Darnell, Chawansky, Marchesseault, Holmes, and Hayhurst, 2016; Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, and Smith, 2016).

Individual Agency in Conflict Interventions

SfC programs are not alone in their emphasis on the ability of individuals to overcome conflict. Within the conflict resolution literature, much focus is placed on

external situational influences such as social learning, cultural narratives and norms, lack of skills, processes or forums for constructively addressing conflicts, and structures and situations that frustrate people's ability to meet their basic needs (Shapiro 2006). "This focus on external rather than inherent causes of human conflict provides a hopeful view of human capacity for consciously changing themselves and their social environment" (Ibid., 4). Although most conflict resolution programs do work at multiple levels of a conflict, "practitioners inevitably seem to choose one level as the starting point or focus in their efforts to facilitate change" (Ibid., 5). The "most prevalent" (Shapiro 2002, 102) level is the individual where change is sought through strategies that shift attitudes, perceptions, feelings, behaviors, and motivations of participants (Ibid., 5). To an extent, it can be argued that such a choice bridges the conflict resolution and SfC field.

In evaluating programs that seek to address racism and inclusion in the United States, Shapiro postulates that the individual focus is popular for three reasons. First, a focus on individuals is "aligned with dominant cultural values of individualism and autonomy" (Ibid., 102). Second, an emphasis on personal experience and growth makes trainings more relevant and appealing to people, and third, providing training for individuals may be an effective method for promoting individual education and introspection (Ibid.). Shapiro found that the ToCs underpinning services/trainings at such programs believe that individuals will be influenced within personal and professional spheres, consequently forming a critical mass of transformed individuals. Shapiro's findings are consistent with existing, though limited, research on SfC assumptions that sport can transform individuals through sport (Coakley 2011).

Changes that are believed to strengthen individuals' capacity (i.e. agency) to overcome conflict can be analyzed at different levels, which can provide a framework with which to examine theories-in-use (Ibid., 7). The levels include the *cognitive* dimension where, for example, eliciting an "aha" experience of insight and ways of thinking about conflict are promoted; the *affective* dimension where emotional control among participants is exercised so as to facilitate rational problem-solving; and the *behavioral* dimension where establishing and modeling new rules and norms for constructive behaviors are prioritized (Ibid., 5).

Although programs aim to encourage and strengthen individual agency, their ToCs can vary toward this aim (Shaprio 2002, 106). The variations stem from consideration of three key factors: the participants served, theories of practice[3], and levels of analysis (Ibid.). Specifically, some suggest that transformed individuals will lead to equitable and inclusive structure while other ToCs suggest the counter – positive structural changes will lead to the transformation of individuals who live and work in them (Ibid.). Some programs seek to create an environment that makes participants feel safe for taking risks; and others challenge participants to step outside their comfort zone. "These factors combine uniquely in each program to suggest who should lead change, what should be changed (and why), and where change should begin" (Ibid.).

Mitchell (2005) states that those who act to create positive change (i.e. change agents) need not be powerful or rich; they can come from any socio-economic level of society as well as background, and possess skills, capabilities, contacts and knowledge,

[3] Theory of practice refers to the description of why programs do what they do (Shapiro 2002).

rather than material resources or high status. Further, change agents need not be removed from the conflict (Mitchell 2005); a concept that stems from the "insider-partial" (Lederach and Wehr 1996) mediation role conducted by a person who is already involved in the conflict (insider) and is to some extent aligned with one party (partial). Insider partials are known and respected by all parties to the conflict, have cultural ties, and are more easily trusted to be fair.

Yet there is also the perspective that transformed individuals who exercise agency are quite limited with respect to the changes they can foster. Mitchell (2005) highlights that "in many situations, it seems most likely that the best any "agents" can accomplish is to take advantage of the opportunities for resolutionary activities afforded by major alterations in the environment or structure of a conflict, rather than bringing about such changes themselves" (18). At best, change agents or "enhancers" can be providers of resources, can monitor the conflict for ripe moments conducive to intervention, or bring about changes in attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and perceptions of those (i.e. leaders and followers) in a conflict (Mitchell 2005). More specifically, what change agents can do to prevent the perpetuation of conflict is to create a constructive learning environment where "old positions, aims and strategies can be rationally reviewed, new ideas offered or generated, alternative futures (including their relative costs) considered coolly rather than immediately rejected, and "road maps" towards acceptable solutions and future relationships are constructed" (Ibid., 19).

Mitchell's assertion serves to caution intervention programs in assuming overly grandiose expectations of individual agency as it relates to overcoming structural conflict

and creating positive change. Instead, interventions should focus on cultivating learning environments in which old patterns can evolve into new ones, with the expectation that new patterns can at most serve to prevent (and not resolve) the perpetuation of conflict.

Such an assertion is important to consider with respect to understanding how and why the phenomenon of sport is believed to address structural conflict and create positive change, particularly from the perspectives of Designers who develop curricula and Implementers who apply them in real time. For example, can sport appropriately cultivate Mitchell's "constructive learning environment" and does sport reflect the three reasons above highlighted by Shapiro that encourage the individual focus in conflict interventions? Do Designers and Implementers vary in their assumptions of what is sport and what sport can do? These are important questions that this research will explore.

Understanding Shifts

To better understand the notion of individual transformation as it applies to agentic activities that address conflict and foster positive change, it is necessary to explore the concept of 'shifts'. Exploring shifts can provide insight into kinds of transformation as well as how transformation is believed to occur and strengthen individuals' ability to act constructively in the presence of conflict. This topic is most especially important given that SfC programs focus on fostering prosocial life skills, such as self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem, decision-making, leadership, public speaking, and health education (SDP IWG 2008; Nohls 2017, 211 quoting Coalter and Taylor, 2010; Mwaanga and Prince, 2016; Spaaij, Oxford, and Jeanes, 2016) as a means

to strengthen attributes deemed necessary to increase positive life opportunities (Coakley 2011; Darnell 2012; Schulenkorf et al., 2016).

Shifts can be viewed in terms of increased awareness, or "consciousness" (Nan 2011) and "conscientization" (Freire 1970). Conflict scholar, Susan Allen articulates that an increased awareness which can interrupt the reinforcement of discourses, memes (i.e. cultural ideas, symbols, and practices), and associated behaviors (Nan 2011, 248) is at the core of conflict resolution practice. Consciousness, states Allen, refers to "sensory and emotional perception, memory, volition, aversions, desires, cognition, and especially to awareness within each of these areas and beyond" (Ibid., 240). Because conflict engages the cognitive (mind), somatic (body), emotional (heart), and spiritual (soul) experience, it becomes increasingly important to employ the use of a "consciousness lens to view conflict and conflict resolution" in order to understand the "interior processes within people engaged in conflict and conflict resolution" (Ibid., 243). More so, fostering shifts (i.e. developing an awareness of culture) enables individuals to expand "the range of options available to them in engaging in the conflict" (Ibid., 252).

Herein lies another potential linkage between conflict and sport that could further understanding about why the two are paired for the purpose of creating positive change. Although conflict and sport are two separate phenomena, Allen helps to highlight the 'mind-body-spirit' characteristic of conflict for the practice of conflict resolution; a characteristic which is also described of sport (SDP IWG 2008).

Sociologist John Mezirow (1997) discusses shifts as "frames of reference" that are "structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. They

selectively shape and delimit expectations, perception, cognition, and feelings. They set our 'line of action'" (5). Mezirow argues that many times a shift in one's frame of reference occurs as a result of discourse, suggesting that meaning is constructed in relationships with others and through dialogue that prompts reflection and new ways of understanding worldviews. To this concept, scholar Richard Kiely (2005) adds that in dialogue and situations where individuals are confronted with perspectives/experiences that do not match their frame of reference, they experience a cognitive dissonance. The locus of change happens at the level of intensity of the dissonance. For example, low-intensity encounters can be more easily integrated into existing frames of reference, while high-intensity encounters, which oftentimes involves emotional reactions, lead to transformational change at the level of questioning/reflecting upon assumptions because they differ so intensely with existing frames of reference.

Specifically, two theories help to capture these explanations. *Inside-Out Peacebuilding Theory* states that when individuals (and/or enough individuals) experience inner transformation, "they can influence societal patterns, identity groups, institutional performance, and other key actors toward constructive conflict engagement" (Nan 2010, 15). Its ToC is that "if key actors and/or enough individuals undergo constructive shifts in their consciousness, such as developing more universal identities or awareness of identity formation, then their commitment and capacity for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and for resisting mobilization of conflictual identities, will increase and can influence social change in that area" (Nan 2010, 72). Specifically, *Shifts in Consciousness Theory* falls within the Inside-Out Peacebuilding Theory and argues

that transformations in individuals' consciousness (or shift as expressed in this study) through reflection, cognitive dissonance, and other experiences can lead them to develop new ways of thinking about ways to cultivate peace; the premise being that large quantities of transformed individuals will lead to social change (Nan 2011). Although not connected to or framed under these theories, the upcoming discussion in the 'Sport as a Catalyst for Change' section of this Chapter highlights this exact premise in SfC programs; further validating the benefit of bridging the conflict and SfC literatures.

Along similar lines as Friere, Nan, Kiely, and Mezirow, conflict scholar Berenike Carstarphen (2003) indicates that a shift is both a *process* and an *outcome*. As an outcome, a shift is "positive changes in attitudes (affects, cognitions) toward the self, other, conflict and perhaps, the world, and positive changes in relationships and behaviors that pave the way" for conflict resolution (Ibid., 310). As a process, a shift is a "relational phenomenon that emerges through the shared experience of participating in authentic, constructive engagement with others over time" (Ibid., 311).

Both process and outcome features of a shift could prove to be relevant in understanding how sport is believed to be an appropriate tool through which to address conflict and create positive change. While sport is defined as a physical activity that can result in outcomes such as improved fitness and strength, it is also understood as a "social connector" process through which positive relationships are developed and can bond and unify people (SDP IWG 2008).

Scholars Tamra d'Estree, Connie Beck and Bonnie Colby (2003) outline three theoretical schools of thought that seek to induce shifts: behavioral, cognitive, and family

systems. Each framework emphasizes cognitive shifts in individuals' perspectives of themselves, the Other and their relationship, and uses cognitive approaches to induce such shifts. The behaviorist approach uses paraphrasing and reframing to help individuals become more accepting and tolerant of the Other; the cognitive-behavioral approach focuses on correcting five ways through which information is processing and which contributes to conflict: selective attention (focusing only on negative aspects of the Other and their relationship); negative attributions and explanations of the Other's behavior, negative expectancies and assumptions about the Other and their relationship; and unrealistic standards for how a relationship should be or how the Other should behave. The family systems school of thought focuses on the stories that evolve through social interaction and that define "reality, decision-making, and behaviors. Here, the aim is to promote change in the stories/realities or relationship between parties so as to alter the individuals' experiences to the conflict.

The shift in stories informs Benjamin Broome's (1993) "third culture" concept which "can only develop through interaction in which participants are willing to open themselves to new meanings, to engage in genuine dialogue, and to constantly respond to the new demands emanating from the situation" (243). The emergence of this third culture is the essence of relational empathy and is essential for successful conflict resolution (Ramsbotham, Miall, and Woodhouse 2011, 61 quoting Broome 1993, 104). Employing methodologies (dialogue, activities) that enable individuals to discuss their ideas and their relationship to other ideas serves as the locus point for shifts in perspective, and which can "transcend" the original divisive cultures of a conflict

situation. More specifically, Broome identifies that methodologies such as dialogue sessions can help participants "gain greater appreciation and respect for the perspective of the other" and construct a "collective framework for the future" (Broome 2009, 195). Participants should be encouraged by Implementers (i.e. coaches, teachers, facilitators) to explore ideas and "truths" as a product of their encounters with others versus as a product of their dominant culture (Broome 1993, 246). To do so, Broome outlines that four conditions must exist for participants: they must be willing to put forth the effort, demonstrate commitment to the encounter, be able to explore and negotiate alternative meanings for ideas and events, and be willing to participate in mutually creative explorations with others (Ibid., 247). This relationally-focused approach can shift participants' perspectives from the "incompatible views that define the past" and form a third-culture that gives rise to an "inclusive, multivocal culture of understanding, appreciation of differences, and solidarity" (Broome 2009, 195).

Carstarphen (2003) suggests that other factors contribute to the creation of shifts. Shifts happen when certain human needs are met within and between individuals and groups in conflict as they "engage in authentic ways and change together in their attitudes, behaviors and relationships over time" (313). Similar to those identified by Burton as being salient to understanding conflict (identity, recognition, security and personal development), Carstarphen highlights the following needs as necessary for shifts to take place:

- *Security*: trust-safety, perception of other as sincere, caring, understanding of self and others to give meaning to the past and to predict and influence the future

- *Identity*: respect, acknowledgement
- *Social bonding*: personal connections, friendships (Ibid., 313)

The following chart illustrates the primary precursors of shift at three dimensions of analysis: individual, transactional, and situational (Ibid., 314-315):

Table 2 Precursors of Shifts (Carstarphen 2013)

Dimension	Precursor	Specific Precursor
Individual	New affective experiences	Personal bonding, feeling acknowledged, surprise, trust-building, empathy, feeling humanity of Other, personal bonding
	Cognitive processes	Cognitive dissonance, perspective-taking and reframing, listening and reflecting, seeing common ground
Transactional	Shared activities	Action projects, socializing and rituals, experiential and joint exercises, sincerity, risk taking, getting to know others
Situational	Roles and functions	
	• Facilitator management skills	Reflective listening, reframing, insightful questions
	• Facilitator leadership roles	Offering new visions, ideas, and skills, addressing power and structural issues, and risk taking
	• Intervention characteristics	Safe and encouraging environment with ground rules
	• Intervention structure	Dialogue, structured activities, flow of

		activities
	• Participant characteristics toward intervention	Open-minded, motivated, committed, and certain personal values

How intervenors/facilitators can observe (and promote) shifts can also be understood through indicators at different levels of analysis: *affective*, cognitive, non-verbal, and verbal (Ibid., 312). At the affective level, indicators are changes in intensity of emotions and in emotions being experienced (i.e. surprise, pain). *Cognitive* indicators include cognitive dissonance, participants struggling to understand, and the emergence of new thinking and realizations. *Nonverbal* indicators include silence, reflection, changes in facial expressions that express affective and cognitive processes (i.e. surprise, confusion, crying). Finally, *verbal indicators* include statements that reflect affective and cognitive indicators (e.g., statements expressing surprise, pain), and statements of acknowledgement of self and others.

Carstarphen argues that the more sudden and dramatic the indicator of change, the more likely the indicator and shift can be observed (Ibid.). This has important implications for intervenors or facilitators, who must remain attuned to more subtle changes that may be occurring in order to capitalize on and facilitate the shift process further.

Indicators

While understanding shifts at a theoretical level is one thing, key to conflict resolution practice is the ability of conflict interveners to stay attuned to shifts, which require recognizing indicators of shifts so as to enable effective navigation of the process (Carstarphen 2003). The field of conflict studies, however, has to date placed emphasis on frameworks which chiefly explain attitudes and cognitive changes linked to behavioral outcomes (Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009; Jon 2013; Mezirow 1978, 1997; Deardorff 2006).

Indicators are especially important to identify in intervention programs given that they are intricately connected to ToCs and to understanding if particular changes have or have not occurred. While ToCs seek to explain how or why changes occur, such as '*if* x takes place *then* y happens', indicators show the extent to which those changes have occurred (the *then* part) (Nan 2010). Nan (2010) outlines four specific steps toward developing indicators:

1. refining ToCs,
2. brainstorming ways to know if change has occurred,
3. identifying the most useful indicators that are culturally embedded, reliable, transferrable/adaptable, valid, and practical, and
4. remaining open to further refinement (13).

Nan cautions against indicators for vague goals that do not reflect what they are intended to measure, and that do not tie to the conflict. For example, Designers should avoid identifying indicators of program effectiveness which may not be the same as

indicators of effectively addressing conflict. Additionally, indicators of worsening conflict may not be the same as indicators of improvement (Ibid., 65). This point is particularly important for the SfC field given that its programs are "without well-defined ToCs that identify the most efficacious ways to promote certain outcomes and impacts" (Whitley 2018, 1 quoting Coalter 2015; Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, Smith 2017). The necessity for exploring the inter-related components, ToCs and assumptions, and shifts and indicators, is therefore a much needed and timely endeavor to which this study seeks to contribute.

Using the above guidelines to create effective programs, Designers should embark on an iterative five-step process for generating indicators as part of ToC development – indicators of change for the "if" and "then" parts:

1. determining the type of change embedded in the theory (i.e. knowledge, attitude, behavior),
2. determine the level of change (i.e. individual, relational, cultural, institutional),
3. specify the change from 'what to what',
4. articulate the theory's assumptions,
5. brainstorm as many qualitative and quantitative indicators of change for the theory as possible (Nan 2010).

The concepts of shifts and indicators are found to be essential for understanding positive change. To this study, a foundation based upon the concept of shifts will provide insights into how individual transformation can transpire, and how such transformation

can be applied to better explain the ways in which SfC programs believe sport enables individuals to address conflict and create positive change. Additionally, the process of developing indicators provides a specific framework that encourages Designers to articulate what change means at the level of assumptions, how change happens, and at what level(s) change takes place. Shifts and indicators are further linked to ToCs, the identification of how and why an initiative works along the pathway of change, which is an integral piece of this research study.

Sport as a Catalyst for Change

In 2008, 34 countries were invited by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG)[4] to share information about their use of sport for development and peace initiatives. Among the 34 countries, "69% of developing countries and 85% of developed countries either use, or plan to use, sport in national strategies for conflict resolution or peace-building" (SDP IWG 2008, 211). This interest is premised on the belief that "at the most fundamental level, well-designed sport activities that incorporate the best values of sport – self-discipline, respect for one's opponent, fair play, teamwork, and adherence to mutually agreed upon rules – help individuals to build the values and communication skills necessary to prevent and resolve conflict in their own lives" (Ibid., 212). Given that the research aim of this study is to explore how and why sport is used to address conflict and create positive change, it is necessary to consult literatures in conflict as well as in sport.

[4] The SDP IWG was first conceived in 2004 as a roundtable forum during the Athens Summer Olympic Games by pioneer governments of Sport for Development and Peace and representatives from the United Nations. It later emerged from the work of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (SDP IWG 2008, vii).

Following is a discussion on sport, its usage in society, its development as a field of study, and specific areas for development as it relates to addressing conflict and change.

What is Sport

Former South African President, Nelson Mandela asserted that "sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people, in a way that little else does" (UN 2019). Paralleling the assertion, the SDP IWG (2008) reiterates that sport is universally popular, possesses the potential to inspire, motivate, and connect individuals and communities, and it is also cross-cutting and a platform for communication.

An etymological exploration reveals that such a conceptualization of sport evolved over time to encompass different emphases (and usages). Sport is derived from "disport" meaning to 'divert oneself' (Delaney and Madigan 2009, quoting Edwards 1973, 11). Initially, it provided people with a diversion from the pressures of daily life by providing them a social venue in which to participate in shared physical activity. Pierre de Coubertin, an honorary president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in the 19th century helped to expand upon this definition through his vision of sport:

> To celebrate the Olympic Games is to lay claim to history …to ask people to love one another is merely a form of childishness. To ask them to respect each other is not utopian, but in order to respect each other they must first know each other. (Coubertin and Muller 2000, 583)

Akin to Intergroup Contact Theory proposed by Gordon Allport (1954) which is premised upon interpersonal contact between groups as a method of reducing prejudices, Coubertin believed that sport could provide a venue within which new generations could

reach mutual understanding and in the process rid themselves of prejudices associated with conflict.

In the 1960-70s, scholars shifted focus to make claims about sport in relation to personal rewards and institutionalization. Heinrich Steinitzer called sport "any activity...engaged in for personal excellence and its reward" (Luschen 1968, 51). In the 1970s, Gunther Luschen defined sport as "an institutionalized type of competitive physical activity located on a continuum between play and world" (Delaney and Madigan 2009, 12). More scholars followed suit with similar emphases throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Ibid.; McIntosh 1970; Jeu 1972; Ingham and Loy 1974; Nixon and Frey 1996) while others such as sociologist John Phillips (1993) suggested that sport simply need not be analyzed and that we unconsciously know which activities our culture defines as a sport.

The 21st century introduced a more insistent shift toward sport as related to broader social structures and contexts. Schinke and Hanrahan (2012) and Delaney and Madigan (2009) identify sport as reflecting culture and a process that enriches people by offering the possibility of solutions where change might be needed at the individual or community level. Jay Coakley (2006) defines sport as "institutionalized competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by internal and external rewards" (21). Sociologist Richard Giulianotti (2015) pushes conventional definitions of sport through arguing for five key properties: that sport is structured, goal-oriented, competitive, ludic and culturally situated. He claims that a sociological lens of sport sheds light onto its

historical and cultural contexts, underlying social structures and power relations, and to the identities that sport allegiances generate (Ibid.). In their review of sport-based initiatives, Baker and Esherick (2009) highlight the importance of interpersonal and intergroup contact in resolving conflict, identifying sport as an effective vehicle with which to foster peace and social justice. Additionally, former ESPN reporter Tom Farrey helped to popularize the concept of 'free play', particularly as a means to challenge organized sport in its role of driving economic inequity and limiting access to opportunities for all (The Aspen Institute Project Play 2015).

In order to clarify the nature of their sport-based work (and their successes), NGOs using sport as a vehicle to foster positive social change have adopted the distinction of 'sport-plus' and 'plus-sport' (Moses 2015; Chen 2018). The main objective of sport-plus programs is to increase participation in sports by reducing barriers to entry through providing resources, equipment and coaching (Moses 2015). Benefits such as improved health, education, and development of life skills are secondary results. Organizations using this approach can demonstrate tangible results within relatively short periods of time, such as that X amount of dollars was used to build a basketball court in a low-income community which has enabled Y amount of at-risk youth to play the sport and benefit from increased physical activity. Plus-Sport programs, on the other hand, identify as their main objective the use of sport as a tool to create social change (Ibid.). These programs are therefore focused on non-sporting outcomes, where unlike the creation of the basketball court above, examples of primary goals would include

increased positive education outcomes, providing mentorship, and improving cognitive and emotional well-being of youth.

Despite the evolving emphases for what is sport, the primary consensus among sport for change actors has been that sport in and of itself is neither good nor bad; the key to determining positive or negative results through sport lies in its usage (Coakley 2011; Sudgen 2010; Kidd 2008).

With the understanding that sport is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which can be both structured and in free play form, this study engages NGOs that have plus-sport missions in their programs. More specifically, in order to better understand how and why sport is used to address conflict and create positive change, this research study adopts the viewpoint that sport is further a reflection of the cultures and structures in a society.

Use of Sport in Society

The role and impact of sport in society has been a subject of debate for centuries (Cárdenas 2002). As a force of good, sport can be traced back to the ninth century BC, when the Olympic Truce or *Eikecheiria*, enabled athletes, artists, families, and ordinary pilgrims of warring states to travel in complete safety to participate in or attend the Olympic Games (Olympic 2019). In a more recent example, Nelson Mandela leveraged the sport of rugby, a traditionally 'white' sport, as a vehicle to unite blacks and whites in South Africa. In 1971, the giving of a gift by Chinese table-tennis player, Zhuang Zedong to American player Glenn Cowan was captured by media outlets and later used as an opening to begin high-level diplomatic contact between the United States and China

(Pigman 2010). The incident is credited with being one of several stimuli that paved the way toward renewed Sino-American relations (Isaacson 1992).

The ability of sport to act as the common denominator between athletes in the midst of competition is also documented. During the 1936 Olympic Games in Nazi-ruled Berlin, German long jumper and Carl "Luz" Long is remembered for reportedly giving advice to his competitor, African-American Jesse Owens, who then went on to qualify for the finals and win the gold medal (Goldman 2009). A picture of the two athletes posing together has become iconic, symbolizing sportsmanship and the opportunities for bonding that can result between individuals despite existing politics of their nations (Goldman 2009).

Yet sport has also proven to be 'bad'. In the 1969 qualifying matches for the 1970 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup, repeated incidences of violence over the course of three games between Honduran and El Salvadorian fans exacerbated a brewing conflict between the two states. Although the conflict was rooted in border disputes and protracted class tensions, sport was the spark that ignited an already inflammable conflict (Cable 1969). In the United States, violence along racial lines was sparked after heavyweight boxer and African American Jack Johnson defeated James Jeffries, a white, then-undefeated heavyweight champion of the world. Immediately after Johnson's victory, riots broke out across parts of the country which was at that time governed under Jim Crow laws. Biographer Geoffrey Ward (2006) writes that "no event yielded such widespread racial violence until the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., fifty-eight years later" (217). True to English writer and

journalist George Orwell, "serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence" (Ibid., 322).

In such cases, sport did not do good; it did not create opportunities for dialogue, diplomacy, or inter-personal bonding. Yet the narrative that sport is a positive force in and for society has dominated both practice and research (Whitley 2018; Coalter 2010).

A Field of Study

The popularity of sport, paired with higher engagement in sport settings by those who have had positive sport-based experiences during their developmental years (i.e. the Great Sport Myth)[5] have reinforced 'the view of sport as an apolitical, neutral, and inherently integrative set of social practices that can deliver a wide range of positive outcomes' (Massey and Whitley 2016 quoting Coalter 2010, 296). This viewpoint held by practitioners, advocates, policymakers, researchers has led to emergence of the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP)[6] field as an acknowledged strategy in underprivileged communities in the developing and developed world (Cárdenas 2012). As a social intervention strategy, SDP utilizes sport and play to achieve peace and development objectives including those outlined by the United Nations (Ibid.). In reciprocal fashion, United Nations has recognized sport as a "human right," "low-cost" and "high-impact" tool in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts, most notably toward the

[5] Coined by sociologist Jay Coakley, The Great Sport Myth refers to the widespread assumption that sport is, inherently, a force of good and that positive experiences from sport are applicable for all persons who play sport.

[6] This study utilizes the term, Sport for Change (SfC) instead of SDP so as to capture a broader range of NGO programs that engage *sport* as a vehicle to create positive *change.*

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UN News 2006, par. 10-11). More specifically, the General Assembly adopted Resolution A/73/L.36 (2018) recognized "sport as an enabler of sustainable development" and reiterated the United Nations' call for member states to leverage sport to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[7] and to work with interested stakeholders, including the sports community, civil society, international organizations, and businesses (1). Among other points that further advocated the call to leverage sport, the Resolution outlined the following:

> Sports and the arts in particular have the power to change perceptions, prejudices and behaviours, as well as to inspire people, break down racial and political barriers, combat discrimination and defuse conflict. (UN 2018b, 3)

Sport is used to address a plethora of conflicts (Coalter 2010; Guest 2009; Kidd 2008; Levermore 2008) and is believed to be a "bridge-building activity and an alternative to violence and destructive conflict" (Ramsbotham, Miall, and Woodhouse 2011, 355). The organization Football4Peace, for example, brings Arab and Jewish children together in Israel through football coaching. Sport is also used to facilitate "mutual recognition, to initiate a first step enabling each to discover the other in a human, rather than hateful, light (Bouzou 2010, 156). Peace Players International, with programs operating in and outside of the United States, Middle East, and Europe seeks to achieve this exact goal through the use of basketball as a tool to foster the "establishment of deep personal bonds and lasting friendships" between divided communities in "neutral" spaces (Peace Players International 2019, par. 2). Grassroots Soccer is another example of an

[7] The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are 19 goals that serve as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address global challenges, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. For more information, visit https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/.

NGO, utilizing football (otherwise known as soccer) that "leverages the power of soccer to educate, inspire, and mobilize at-risk youth in developing countries to overcome their greatest health challenges, live healthier, more productive lives, and be agents for change in their communities" (Grassroot Soccer 2019, par. 1). Football 4 Peace (F4P) utilize soccer as a space where conflict represents teachable moments where youth are encouraged to learn how to resolve disagreements in constructive ways (Lea-Howarth 2006, 13).

Scholar Alexander Cárdenas identifies that "a potential contribution of sport in resolution processes is that it provides a sub-systemic nucleus around which social networks can be formed and where members can be taught about resolving conflict" (Cárdenas 2012, 10). This is significant because if sport is believed to create spaces where conflict resolving skills can be taught, there exists the need to have a clear understanding of what is taught, how it is taught and expected to address conflict at other levels of society. Although few SfC interventions are grounded in existing conflict resolution theories, those which are "have made use of - or could potentially be grounded in - peace building theories such as Galtung's 3 Rs (1998), Lederach's web-approach to peace building (2005) and Schirch's use of rituals (2005)" (Cárdenas 2016). For example, in its aim to reduce prejudice linked to the reduction of conflict in society, Peace Players International grounds its use of sport as a vehicle that encourages a "web of relationships with others, including their enemies" (Tuohey and Cognato 2011, 54). Sport acts as a "relational hub" that helps parties, their families, and community members to reimagine new realities and relationships as they interact (Ibid.); a concept put forth by Lederach's

(2005) web-approach to peace building (2005) and emphasis on the creation of strategic networks.

Additionally, sporting events or physical activities can be used as "rituals" (Schirch 2005) that help to humanize subsects of people, such as victims and perpetrators of violence. As a reconstruction and reconciliation tool, sport can help to create environments in which a sense of security and normality can be regained (Cárdenas 2010, 10 quoting Serena 2009, 11), while it can also serve as an appealing reason with which to recreate structures (i.e. stadiums, sport fields) where civil society can convene and have opportunities for dialogue particularly in post-conflict situations (Cárdenas 2010, 8).

As middle level actors, NGOs are in an ideal position to garner the attention of grassroots and local and national actors in the aim to promote positive change (Ibid., 10 quoting Sugden and Haasner 2010). This is fortunate, given that the online web portal, International Platform on Sport for Development and Peace lists over 950 registered NGOs working in the SfC field in comparison to the 176 in 2006 (Levermore 2018; Whitley et al 2019). This highlights a 439.8% increase in 13 years. Additionally, the rise in journals that cover sport for change topics (i.e. Journal of Sport for Development and Journal of Sport Psychology in Action) coupled with emerging academic programs are indicators as to the growth and increased popularity of sport for change as a legitimate and valuable field of study. For example, the Sport and Conflict Resolution minor at George Mason University (GMU) was designed through a partnership between the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism. The interdisciplinary minor offers courses that "frame the sports industry in a

philosophical, ethical, cultural and business context" while introducing students to "foundational concepts in the study of human conflict, the analysis of conflict and problem solving techniques for helping to resolve conflict (GMU 2019, par. 2). Another example is the Sports Impact Leadership Certificate (SILC) (2017) at John's Hopkins University. SILC is a certificate program housed within the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, and that partners with the University's Center for Advanced Governmental Studies. It is a non-credit, virtual training program at the intersection of sport and philanthropy.

Several centers have begun to form within universities as well. The Center for Sport, Peace, and Society (CSPS) at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville is housed within the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. Its mission is to help "global leaders develop innovative solutions to socio-political challenges using sport. We work to create a more peaceful, equitable, and inclusive world" (University of Tennessee Knoxville 2019).[8]

The increase of SfC initiatives as well as of research institutions committed to advancing scholarship on SfC indicates the sustained appeal of sport and strong investment/interest in exploring the potential of what sport can do for society. This presents both a need and an opportunity, particularly in the research arena. The need for understanding how and why sport can do good, both at theoretical and evaluative levels, creates opportunities to conduct more research. Insights from research can be used to

[8] There are several other programs within academic institutions and NGOs globally, however, this study has chosen to focus on those located in the United States in order to stay consistent with its geographic focus.

inform practice, while practice can provide data with which research can continue to explore sport and its role in society. An increase of institutional programs/centers focused on SfC is therefore a relevant and timely occurrence that signals the recognition that research and practice can benefit from working alongside the other.

Areas for Development

Despite the growth of SfC initiatives and research efforts, there remains several areas for development. Among them is the need for aligning efforts at the local level to the societal level (Ricigliano 2012; Massey et al. 2015; Nols et al. 2017 quoting Schulenkorf et al. 2016; Darnell, Chawansky, Marchesseault, Holmes, and Hayhurst, 2016; Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, and Smith 2016). Specifically, this means that a gap exists between "micro-level programs (e.g., social inclusion of girls and women in sport) and macro-level change (e.g., changing the dynamics of systematic oppression of girls and women)" (Massey et al. 2015, 20). Two particular reasons attributed to this gap is the assumption that sport has the ability to address complex phenomena such as structural conflict (Sudgen 2006), and that SfC efforts are founded upon vague goals and unspecified ToCs (Ricigliano 2012); both of which are compounded by a lack of clarity as to what peace and development means (Coalter 2010).

Addressing this gap can allow programs to maximize human, financial, and infrastructure resources as well as to expand upon the "limited theory development" in SfC that is largely discipline-specific by integrating across academic disciplines, knowledge production, selection of theoretical lenses, and consideration of methodological approaches (Whitley 2018, 5). Investing time in the development of

ToCs, and consideration of context – such as cultural, structural, social, political, and economic realities – surrounding sport-based programs (Whitley 2018, 2 quoting Darnell and Hayhurst 2012, and Lindsey and Grattan 2012) are critical areas in which further development is necessary.

The need for long-term programs (Whitley 2018; Chen 2018 quoting Armstrong 2007; Hognestad and Tollisen 2004; Lindsey 2017), and the need to rely on the interests, challenges, and cultures of the implemented communities instead of tailoring activities to fulfill interests/objectives of donors (Giles and Lynch, 2012; Lindsey 2017) are additional critical areas on which to pay attention.

For the purpose of this study, the following areas within the SfC field will be explained in more detail. First, and as noted above, there exists a lack of consensus on terminology. Meredith A. Whitley, Kelly Farrell, Eli A. Wolff, and Sarah J. Hillyer (2019) conducted a study that assessed the current state of the SDP field through soliciting feedback on a questionnaire. One hundred forty (140) participants across six continents (Africa, Australia, Asia, Europe, North America, South America) responded to a questionnaire designed to capture the experiences of those actively working in the field. These actors were engaged at various levels of society such as organizational (31.42%), programming (20.71%), academia (15.71%), as well as other practitioners such as consultants and sport psychologists (Whitley et al. 2019, 2). Amongst these actors, there was no consensus as to what SDP meant, nor what SDP should include: "most provided complex, nuanced responses that addressed many facets of SDP that were subsequently categorized into themes." In the following hierarchical order, themes included the use of

sport, physical activity, and play for: social justice, social inclusion, personal development, social development, health promotion, youth development (Ibid., 4).

Whitley et al. highlighted that despite the growth and evolution of the SDP field over the past twenty years, its definition continues to be plagued by a lack of clarity and consensus on the terms that make up its name. For example, the terms "development" and "peace" are vague and oftentimes divided into terms such 'Sport for Development' or simply 'Sport for Peace,' and additionally, 'Sport-based Youth Development, positive youth development through sport, sport-in-development, sport and peacebuilding (Sudgen 2010). Not only is there a lack of clarity in the names used by actors in the field, there is "even greater diversity, complexity, and obfuscation in the definitions of these terms" (Whitley et al. 2019, 4).

Clarity of terms would bring more "conceptual and theoretical clarity" (Nols et al. 2015, 211 quoting Schulenkorf and Spaaij 2016) so that interventions can work off an established baseline understanding of what certain terms mean. This would also allow for research on 'apple-to-apple' comparisons across programs to be made as well as for recommendations that build on findings which analyze, measure, and evaluate the same meaning of concepts used.

In another study of SfC programs, findings revealed that 'development' was mostly defined as an individual process in which socialization experiences were believed to produce the attributes needed to increase youth's life chances (Coakley 2011; Darnell 2012; Schulenkorf et al., 2016). In this sense, development focused on fostering prosocial life skills in areas such as: self-confidence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem, decision-

making, leadership, public speaking, human rights, gender attitudes, prevention of sexual violence, and knowledge about health (Nohls 2017, 211 quoting Coalter and Taylor, 2010; Mwaanga and Prince, 2016; Spaaij, Oxford, and Jeanes, 2016). It did not, however, include the need for social justice, collective empowerment and action, or transformative social change at a community or institutional level (Nols 2017, 211 quoting Coakley, 2011; Darnell 2010; Hayhurst, Wilson, and Frisby 2010; Lawson 2005). Herein lies assumptions that behavior changes will be transferred to other areas of life, and that there will be a cumulative effect on the society at large if enough individuals change their behavior (Whitley et al. 2015, 21; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011).

With regard to the individual focus, scholars have highlighted that many sport for change programs are "imbued with paternalistic values and neoliberal philosophies that emphasize the need for individual responsibility and treat young people as problems to be solved (i.e., with flawed attitudes or displaying 'anti-social' behaviour)" (Nols et al. 2015, 211 quoting Coakley, 2011; Darnell 2012; Darnell and Hayhurst, 2011; Rossi and Jeanes 2016). Herein lies the assumption that young people from disadvantaged communities are uniformly deficient as well as in need of development – assumptions that align with a deficit model (Nols et al. 2017 quoting Coakley 2011; Coalter 2013).

This approach has two critical implications. The first is that presumptions about the actual deficiencies faced by youth are not based on systemic assessments of needs and social conditions. The second implication is that attention is detracted from the broader social and structural contexts, such as poverty, social inequalities that contributed to youths' conflictual situation in the first place (Nols et al. 2017). In many sport-based

efforts, there exists the aspiration that multiple micro-level changes focused on individual development and success will add up to macro-level outputs while minimizing societal level change (Coakley 2011). However, research has shown that individual behavior change is ineffective for promoting societal level change (Whitley, Blom, and Gerstein 2015 quoting Anderson and Olsen, 2003; Reflections of Peace Practice 2009a, 2009b, 2011).

Herein lies a key area for improvement in sport for change efforts, articulated succinctly by Coalter (2010) that "micro-level effects are, wrongly, generalized to the macro-level" (205) in the SfC field. If the individual focus is to be successful, it must be linked to the macro level. Darnell and Hayhurst (2011) suggest that "sport does not, and most likely cannot, usurp the social-political relations and challenges of international development organization, policy, and implementation" (188). Rather than relying on sport to solve political, economic, and social issues, there is a need to better understand *how* sport can be used to effect dynamic relationships within a social system (Ibid.).

Whitley, Blom, and Gerstein (2015) assert that to account for variations in nations, regions, and communities across a macro-level focus, SfC programs should identify four factors: what the macro-level factors are; how these factors interact with and are influenced by other key factors in the system; how a sport program can affect the relationship between key factors in a system; and fourth, how to create collaborative programs that aim to address these dynamics (22). An understanding of context, therefore, is fundamental.

Scholars have reached consensus that a systems approach must be adopted in order for programs to include a macro-level focus in which groups or societies are transformed to engage in more peaceful and healthy processes of change (Whitley et al. 2015 quoting Coakley, 2011; Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011; Ricigliano, 2012; Schulenkorf and Sugden, 2011; Sugden, 2010; Schulenkorf and Adair, 2013). The Sport-for-Development (S4D) framework (Schulenkorf 2012), and the Sport-for-Development Theory (SFDT) (Lyras and Welty 2011) are examples of two models that emphasize the importance of planning for direct micro to macro changes.

Toward this aim, Robert Ricigliano (2012) offers an integrated assessment framework, Structural, Attitudinal, and Transactional (SAT) model of peace building, that incorporates elements of conflict resolution approaches such as those present in Maire Dugan's Nested Theory of Conflict and Burton's basic human needs. The *structural* domain of the SAT is designed to bring attention to the relevance of functionality (i.e. healthcare) and access to basic needs in peaceful societies. The domain includes consideration of seven major components: governance, security, economy, human rights, social services, environment/natural resources, the media, and civil society. Sport programs should assess the role of structural factors in society as well as how each affects the other toward fostering the intended change. The *attitude* domain refers to identifying and understanding how groups within a society views themselves in relation to the larger society. Attitudinal factors that affect peace include social capital, intergroup relationships, and core grievances where the latter results in unmet needs or systemic oppression/discrimination. Here, sport programs should assess relationships between

attitudinal factors in addition to how they might undermine the desired change. Lastly, the *transactional* domain highlights the processes and prosocial skills used by people to manage the effects of conflict and build relationships. Sport programs should identify and engage individuals who have influence over the behaviors and attitudes of others as well as over the attitudinal and structural elements of conflict.

Adopting a macro level focus to sport programs is key, yet more fundamental seems to be the incorporation of ToC. Scholars have asserted that "context specific theories of change must be developed prior to program design, implementation, and evaluation" (Whitley et al. 2015). For example, consideration of all three elements of the SAT model described above is necessary for developing context-specific TOC.

In this light, Coalter (2017) calls for a shift away from "families of programmes (e.g. sport and crime; sport and conflict) to families of mechanisms – the processes, relationships and experiences that might achieve the desired outcomes. In terms of investment decisions and programme development, there is a need to clarify programme theories, or theories of behaviour change, which inform, or should inform, programme design and practice (Coalter 2017 quoting 607, Coalter, 2007). Similarly, Chen (2018) highlights the need for "theoretical rather than methodical efforts" (1). Theoretical articulation of the logical underpinnings of sport programs have been kept to a minimum, with limited questioning about cause and effect, or about the ways in which sport can contribute to the fostering positive social outcomes (Chen 2018).

Indeed, the concept of ToC remains underemployed in the SfC field (Ibid., 6). "This has resulted in programs without well-defined TOCs that identify the most

efficacious ways to promote certain outcomes and impacts" (Whitley 2018, 1 quoting Coalter 2015; Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, Smith 2017). Furthermore, researchers in this field have focused on outcomes and impacts rather than the underlying inputs and processes (Ibid., quoting Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, Smith 2017; Cronin 2011; Lyras and Welty Peachey 2011). "Without this knowledge, SDP programs are magical 'black boxes' whose inputs and processes are presumed (Ibid., quoting Scriven 1994) without understanding why specific outcomes and impacts are (not) reached (Ibid., quoting Coalter 2013; Weiss 1995).

Whitley (2018) suggests that interventions should focus on adopting program theories (i.e. ToCs, logic models); strategically and rigorously test program theories through longitudinal studies and/or long-term data collection efforts; and measure change over time. Chen (2018) asserts that the incorporation and development process of ToCs offer an "opportunity to foster open communications between programme makers, programme operators, and programme evaluators; in turn, this process makes sure that there is a consistency in the assumptions made and actions taken" (6).

In arguing for the primacy of understanding the theories that underpin intended outcomes, particularly as a requisite for monitoring and evaluation efforts, Coalter (2013) states:

> …without program providers having some theory of behaviour change it is very difficult to develop a legitimate and valid approach to M&E and contribute to increased program effectiveness – especially if one wants to avoid accusations of neo-colonial epistemological oppression. (10).

The foundational challenge for the SfC field, therefore, lies in "defining the practical details involved in the design and delivery of SDP programmes, in applying

rigorous evaluation approaches for capturing such impacts, and in taking on broad lessons learned from different SDP programmes" (Chen 2018, 7). Further, examination of theoretical underpinning will "provide some basis for generalisation in order to inform future programme design" (Coalter 2015, 21).

Researchers in the SfC field have expressed an urgent need for the use of ToCs in SfC programs. Specifically, they call for context-specific ToCs that incorporate elements of micro and macro levels of society to be developed before program design, implementation, and evaluation. Grounded in these critiques, this study explores SfC programs in the Global North to better understand the logical underpinnings, assumptions, and kinds of information (both formal and tacit) about how and why sport can be used to address conflict and create positive change.

Such a focus heeds the call to shift focus away from kinds of programs (i.e. sport and x) toward exploring the assumptions, processes, relationships and experiences that might achieve programs' desired changes. This research focus contributes to existing, and lack thereof, theoretical knowledge in the SfC field while at the same increases the bank of necessary information available to SfC actors. By extension, the study also explores what conflict means to Designers and Implementers who create SfC curricula; that perhaps there is a piece of understanding which better frames the kind of work they conduct.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research study explored how and why sport is used to address conflict and create positive change. Specifically, the following research questions guided the choice of methodology and study design: How does sport address conflict? Why is sport used as a vehicle for positive change and how does sport facilitate such change? What kinds of knowledge inform the construction of SfC curricula? What are the ways in which SfC actors reflect upon their work?

Exploring these questions helps two end users who intervene in conflict: SfC actors and conflict resolution practitioners. First, this research directly addressed the need for increased theoretical understanding in the SfC field (Chen 2018, Whitley et al. 2015; Coalter 2015, 2013; Ricigliano 2012). Specifically, the research helps SfC actors to enhance program design and evaluation by focusing on a more preliminary yet foundational level: pathways of change, assumptions, and underlying elements of sport and conflict, separately and collectively.

The study further contributes to the field of conflict resolution (CR) by building upon its multi-disciplinary nature and expanding the existing pool of innovative intervention tools with which to respond to conflict. The research enables the field to gain insights into the various perceptions of conflict in use and thereby create an opportunity

for reflection, enhancements, and collaborations across disciplines. For the conflict resolution practitioner, the research provides for a richer understanding into ways in which conflict interveners' can be attuned to subtle shifts in perceptions of individuals in conflict situations, thereby capitalizing on opportunities to facilitate positive change in practice.

Toward this aim, the study utilized a methodology that allowed for three layers of exploration. First, interviews were conducted with 'Designers' (i.e. program directors, managers) who create SfC curricula at NGOs which have programs operating in the United States. From the data obtained during these interviews, four NGO programs were selected for observation in order to gain more insight into what happens on the ground with participants in SfC programs. These four programs were selected based on showing the most difference from among those included in the sample of this study in terms of their thinking and their approach to use sport to address conflict and create positive change. After each observation, the researcher conducted a post-observation interview with the 'Implementer' (i.e. coach) who conducted the session.

Choosing a Qualitative Research Method

Traditionally, the field of social science has two research approaches: qualitative and quantitative. While quantitative research requires the standardization of data collection to allow statistical comparison, qualitative research requires more flexibility, allowing the researcher to respond to user data as it emerges. A qualitative research can take the form of interviews and/or observations where the researcher must observe and

document opinions, patterns, needs, thoughts, behaviors, and other types of information (Madrigal and McClain 2012).

This research study followed the qualitative approach. Using an iterative, multi-layered, and flexible design that allowed for eliciting and understanding meanings more effectively, the study incorporated interviews, observations, and post-observation interviews with features of a case study. Such a design enabled the researcher to respond to the complexities underpinning what SfC actors said as well as what they did. Speaking to the important uses of qualitative research, scholar John Creswell (2007) emphasized that, indeed, "we cannot separate what people say from the context in which they say it" (40). It is, therefore, necessary to employ a methodology that enables the exploration into the ways in which thoughts and actions inform the other. This methodology strengthens the capability of the study to contribute to the interplay between theory and practice.

Additionally, this research study incorporated features of a case study where multiple programs were selected from among the NGOs in the sample for further exploration. After the interview phase, the researcher narrowed the list of 10 NGOs into a list of four that would be observed. Narrowing was accomplished using the purposeful sampling technique (Ibid., 75) which is based upon the selection of programs across different research sites (i.e. programs), perspectives, accessibility or unusually different cases in order to study the phenomena of this research – ToC, sport and conflict. Accordingly, the four NGOs were selected based on: what sport was used (so as to ensure diversity), how sport was used, how change was believed to transpire through curricula, and specific outcomes to ensure diversity of goals included in the sample (academic

success, assimilation of immigrants, mental health, and delivering quality education). Additionally, the level of engagement by the NGO representatives and availability of programs were also factored in to compromise the sample of four for observation.

The strengths of a qualitative research approach are plentiful (Anderson 2010, 2). Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman (1999) identify the kinds of research for which qualitative methods are useful:

- Research that involves in-depth examination of complex data.
- Research that allows for the collection of subjective and emergent information,
- Research for which relevant variables have yet to be identified.
- Research into less known areas of research.

Creswell (1998) addresses methods appropriate in qualitative studies. Qualitative research:

- Describes how and what is going on.
- Is conducted with attention to natural settings, not contrived and out of context.
- Is written and reported in a narrative style and includes the personal voice of the researcher.

The qualitative approach was best suited to exploring answers to the research questions regarding the thinking behind how and why sport is used to address conflict and create positive change, based on the assumption that "[w]hat people have to say reveals their mental worlds and the logic they bring to experiences" (Goodman 2001, 310). Despite the rapid growth of the SfC field over the past decade, the "relevant variables" have not yet been explored in-depth. Informed by the literature referenced in

this study, the variables might include: sport as a connector of people (SDP IWG 2008); the Great Sport Myth (Coakley 2015); contact hypothesis theory (Allport 1954); resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation (Galtung 1998); web-approach to peace building (Lederach 2005); and use of rituals (Schirch 2005).

The aim to learn more about the mental worlds and the logic that underpins SfC actors' perspectives and approaches in the design and implementation of their programs is best achieved through detailed descriptions gained through open-ended interviews as well as observations. By grounding this study in the thinking of SfC Designers as well as in the practice of Implementers, the researcher develops further knowledge in and of the field and assists in identifying the variables and issues most relevant to those who are actively intervening in conflict.

Participant Selection

The researcher's aim is to understand the thinking of SfC Designers and Implementers as it relates to how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change. To do so, this study is grounded in the analysis of open-ended, semi-structured interviews with SfC actors as well as in the analysis of observations of SfC programs. The following section details the criteria used for participant inclusion in the study and the sampling choices utilized to create the interview pool.

The majority of SfC programs exist within non-governmental organizations and so therefore it made logical sense to focus on this particular subset. In order to compile a pool of interviewees whose work experiences were aligned to provide insights into the

research questions of this study, the researcher developed a set of four criteria to guide selection. First, the NGOs had to be chartered as a 501(c)3 based in the United States (US). Second, they had to specify a 'plus-sport' (Moses 2015) mission statement, a term used to indicate the use of sport as a vehicle to foster positive social change in society. Third, the SfC program at the NGOs had to be active or on-going in the case that it would be selected for observation. And fourth, the programs had to be conducted in the United States so as to reduce accessibility obstacles to observation. Focusing on programs operating in the United States would also fill a research gap in the SfC field given that internationally-based SfC programs are ones which are most often the subject of research.

Sampling

With this criteria in mind, the researcher initially used word-of-mouth and internet searches to find US-based NGOs that have programs conducted in the country. This method proved to be difficult given that after reaching out to a few NGOs, the response rates were quite low or non-existent. The researcher then adjusted the sampling approach to a discriminative snowball sampling by reaching out to a professional contact in the SfC field to request referrals. After a few introductions to SfC Designers, the researcher was successful at obtaining a list of NGOs from which to select, especially given that each new contact expressed willingness to provide another referral. From this pool of NGOs, those which met all four criteria were selected and ultimately comprised the set of 10 included in the study.

Adjusting the sampling approach proved to be a beneficial decision. First, the pool of potential NGOs – and therefore interviewees – from which to select grew quickly

in quantity. This growth enabled the researcher to select the most fitting programs for the aim of this study versus spending exponentially more time and effort to find NGOs that not only fit the criteria but were also willing to participate in the study. Second, through referrals the researcher became somewhat 'pre-approved' and was perceived as more of an 'insider' seeking to learn more about SfC programs instead of an outside researcher looking in to critique the programs. Having referrals from the SfC actors themselves, along with maintaining control over which NGOs were ultimately selected for inclusion into the study enabled the researcher to incorporate a diverse set of programs that use sport as a vehicle through which to address conflict and create positive change.

The following chart[9] illustrates ecological information about the 10 NGOs that comprise the sample:

Table 3 Ecological Information of NGOs in Sample

NGO	Location	Sport	Target population(s)	Key Area of Change
1	Massachusetts	Basketball, soccer, others	Youth	Mental Health
2	Maryland	Soccer	Youth	Immigrant assimilation
3	Washington, D.C.	Baseball, softball	Youth	Academic achievement
4	Washington, D.C.	Soccer	Youth	Academic achievement
5	Washington, D.C.	Basketball	Youth	Inter-group prejudice
6	New York	Play	Youth, Adults	Quality education
7	Maryland	Squash	Youth	Academic achievement

[9] Although the chart identifies a key area of change, all NGOs stated improved physical health and social and emotional skills (with specific foci) as additional areas of change.

8	Washington, D.C.	Soccer	Youth	Physical and personal development
9	Washington, D.C.	Lacrosse	Youth	Physical and personal development
10	Georgia	Soccer	Youth	Employability

Data Gathering Methods

Primary data were gathered through a total of twenty open-ended standardized interviews; sixteen of which were conducted with Designers and four of which were conducted with Implementers after the four observation sessions. The researcher's focus was to learn more about the thinking that underpin how SfC actors perceive and use sport as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change. For this reason, interviews with those who designed as well as implemented SfC programs provided the best initial avenue for obtaining data regarding the logic with which SfC actors approach their work.

In-Depth Interviews

Conflict theorist Maire Dugan (1996) shared that all of us are theorists, whether or not our theories have been articulated and explored. She stated the following:

> ...My own opinion and experience is that we are all theorists, each one of us. But some of us may not have articulated our theories or even explored the ways in which our ideas are connected and form systems of thinking…From this perspective, I think that the theory I am presenting in the following pages may be less important than the story of how I came to develop it. (10)

A common data collection tool used in the qualitative approach is the open-ended standardized interviews, which the researcher utilized in order to learn more about the interviewees' stories, thinking, and logic behind the phenomena of sport, conflict, and

positive change. Dugan's quote above helps to highlight that both Designers and Implementers included in this study are indeed "theorists" who have valuable insights to offer. The role of the researcher then, is to help them explore their "systems of thinking" through in-depth interviews as a means to unearth their theories while at the same time help to articulate them. Described as "a construction site of knowledge" (Kvale 1996, 2) where individuals discuss a "theme of mutual interest" (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 2) the use of interviews proved to yield data in large quantity quickly.

Social scientist Irving Seidman (2006) outlines three components to an interview process, whereby the researcher explores the interviewees' life history, contemporary experience, and reflections on meaning so as to allow each individual to reconstruct their experiences, put it in the context of their lives, and reflect on its meaning (34). The researcher heeded these three components when developing an interview guide comprised of a list of questions derived from the research questions of this study. Characteristic of open-ended standardized interviews, the guide consisted of questions that were generally asked in a particular order, which began with grand tour questions about the interviewee's personal background and how they entered the SfC field. However, the researcher did respect the flow of each conversation by following the topical trajectories that strayed from the guide. In such cases, it did not make sense to follow the pre-set order of questions. Instead, the researcher continued to listen intently in the case that the interviewee was in actuality answering the question (or possibly another question) in his/her own way. Taking this approach helped to foster a sense of trust and comfort from the interviewees as they recognized that the open yet structured

conversation was based on learning and understanding versus extracting or hunting for certain kinds of responses.

Regardless, all pre-set questions were eventually asked as they fit into the conversation and without jarring the ebb and flow developed between researcher and interviewee. Additionally, the researcher used layman terms so as to be clear and avoid overly academic words that could potentially discourage open-ended responses about key concepts of this study, such as sport and conflict. "Echo probes" were also leveraged to encourage interviewees to expand upon their responses. Social scientist H. Russell Bernard (2006) asserts that echo probes are an effective technique to use when interviewees describe processes, such as processes which relate to conflict and change. Bernard further asserts that echo probes encourage interviewees to continue and expand on their responses (Ibid., 210). In this way, the researcher repeated back interviewees' responses/explanations and asked for clarification/additional details so as to 'probe' and ensure that the intended meanings were captured. Employing strong listening skills and question (re)framing (Marshall and Rossman 2011) further served to guide the researcher throughout the interviews.

There are several benefits to using open-ended standardized interviews, where the same questions are asked of all interviewees. First, comparability of responses across a question or topic for each interviewee is increased. Second, it facilitates organization and analysis of the data. Third, interviewer bias is reduced, and fourth, researchers or

evaluators are able to see and review the instrumentation used in the research (Patton 2002).[10]

Management and Retrieval

Participants were contacted by electronic mail. Prior to conducting interviews, each interviewee was provided with consent letters for permission to participate in the research and to record the conversation. Minimal notes were taken during the interview in order to stay present with and to better listen to the interviewee. Immediately following each interview, the researcher took notes to capture impressions and potential areas or points of interest that stood out. Irving Seidman (2006) suggests that interviews should be transcribed so as to avoid substituting the researcher's consciousness for that of the participant (114). Guided by this point, interviews were transcribed so as to retain participants' actual words in their entirety in a format that was verbatim and not edited for grammar, pauses, or filler words. Certain places in the transcription were bolded to indicate intensity and tone.

For the observation part of this research design, the researcher took notes before and during the observation sessions, and initial impressions were incorporated immediately after each of the four sessions. Post-observation interviews with Implementers were either conducted in-person following the sessions, or over email and phone as per the availability of the Implementers.

Observation

[10] Patton, M.Q. (2002). Qualitative research and Evaluation Methods. Chapter 7: Qualitative Interviewing. Third Edition. Sage Publications, Inc.

The significance of exploring practice is aptly emphasized in the following quote: "…practice should be regarded as interdependent with the ways that knowledge is generated and with the kinds of theory sought" (Argyris, et al. 1985, 20). With this interdependency in mind, the research design of this study incorporated observations so as to better understand the thinking and approaches behind how and why SfC actors use sport as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change. Combining interviews with an observation phase – "looking, hearing, smelling, or touching" – is a methodology that allows researchers to understand the meanings that everyday activities hold for people (Marshall and Rossman 2011, 145). It allows for another layer through which the researcher can elicit emic perspectives relevant to the research questions.

The researcher utilized the series of steps suggested by Creswell (2007) for observations. Creswell suggests that the researcher should first select a site to observe, and then identify who or what to observe, when, and for how long. Next, the researcher should decide the nature of her role during observation; from complete participant to complete observer. The researcher should then develop an observational protocol as a method for recording descriptive and reflective notes such as "experiences, hunches, and learning" (Ibid., 134). Additionally, the researcher should "record aspects such as portraits of the informant, on the physical setting, particular events and activities, and your reactions" (Ibid., quoting Bogdan and Biklen 1992). Particularly helpful to this research, Creswell's protocol advice provided a template through which to organize the details of what was observed in the midst of many moving pieces between Implementer, participants, and physical settings of each session. For information that did not 'fit' into

the categories of observed experiences, hunches, and learning, the researcher included a 'miscellaneous' section to capture details that could have proved insightful in the data analysis.

Creswell further advises that during observations, the researcher should be introduced as an outsider, and should remain passive, friendly and focused on taking notes and observing. Upon exiting, the researcher should thank the participants and inform them of the use of the data and their accessibility to the study. In all four observation cases, the researcher was introduced to participants by the Implementer, and took the role of a complete observer. Only those who were interviewees in this study (Designers and Implementers) were informed of the use/accessibility of the data.

From the data obtained during the interview phase of this study, four NGO programs were selected to be observed in order to gain more insight into what happens on the ground with participants in SfC programs, as well as to explore connections between what was said and what was done. Participants in the observed programs were not subjects of this study.

The four observation programs were selected based on having shown the most difference from among those included in the sample of this study in terms of thinking and approaches behind how and why SfC actors use sport to address conflict and create positive change. Examples of differences that determined selection included the kind of sport used, how the process of sport was used, the kinds of add-on services provided, the target population, the lens through which conflict and change were viewed, and how such a viewpoint was believed to address conflict and create positive change. Additionally, the

availability of sessions and the level of transparency by the NGO representatives played a role in the selection of the final four NGOs for observation.

A post-observation interview was conducted immediately after each observed session, as a means to discuss and clarify what was seen, what was thought, and what was done in real-time (in practice), and to provide the Implementer with an opportunity to add his/her own thoughts, comments, and any questions/concerns. While Designers and Implementers had their own set of interview questions given the nature of their roles, two of the questions were identical for both groups: 'what does sport mean to you,' and 'what does conflict mean to you?' Depending on the availability of the Implementers, the post-observation interviews were conducted either in-person or over the phone and electronic mail.

To address the possibility of observer bias, which could jeopardize the reliability and validity of data, methodologists advise qualitative researchers to hone an awareness of possible observer effects, document them, and incorporate them as caveats into reports on fieldwork (Patton 2002). Heeding this advice, the researcher employed two strategies: recording assumptions in a separate journal before each observation session, and informing only those who needed to know about the purpose of the study and observation (the Designer and Implementer of the observed NGO).

Observer effect was another possibility about which the researcher remained cognizant. While a researcher's presence could indeed influence the behavior of Implementers and be seen as an issue, social scientists Torin Monahan and Jill Fisher (2010) advise that any sort of "staged" or influenced behavior is in actuality important to

consider as data because they are "deeply revealing of how individuals perceive themselves and would like to be perceived" (363). Such data should be embraced, "not as a representation of any singular Truth, necessarily, but as rich symbolic texts that lend themselves to multiple interpretations and provide critical insights into the cultures being studied" (Ibid.). To reduce observer effect, the researcher emphasized the purpose of the study to the Implementer before the start of each observation session. The researcher highlighted that she was not present to evaluate the participants nor the effectiveness of the program and was simply present to better understand the thinking and approaches behind how and why sport is used to address conflict and create positive change; a clarification that Implementers appeared to appreciate.

The three-layered research design that consisted of interviews with Designers, observations of programs, and post-observation interviews with Implementers enabled the researcher to learn about the thinking (theories) of SfC actors as well as about the ways in which the thinking was applied in real-time (practice). Such insights increased the ability of the researcher to further the research-practice-theory-reflection cycle by capturing the:

1. kinds of knowledge that underpin SfC actors' beliefs about sport, conflict, and change.
2. descriptions that more closely resemble actual practice.
3. particularized knowledge developed in response to SfC efforts as it relates to conflict and change.

4. assumptions that underpin established ways of thinking and approaches to addressing conflict and creating change.

Data Analysis Procedures

Sociologist Michael Quinn Patton (2002) accurately stated the amount of data collected from qualitative methods such as interviews and observations will be voluminous. Researchers should therefore think of data as "something to cuddle up with, embrace, and get to know better" (Marshall and Rossman 2011, 210). Marshall and Rossman (2011) state that analysis of data falls into seven steps which the researcher utilized as a guide to make sense of the data which emerged from this study. The steps are to organize the data, immerse into the data, generate categories and themes, code the data, offer interpretations through analytic memos, search for alternative understandings, and finally, write the report or other format for presenting the study. Each will be described below in relation to this research study.

Organize and immerse:

A 'data matrix' was created using categories which were extracted from the research questions of this study. These categories were turned into headings in the data matrix and all interview questions of this study were placed accordingly under the appropriate category heading. Each category heading and interview question was assigned a number. For example, Category 3 was identified as 'How is the resolution of conflict envisioned through the use of SfC programs' and an example of the first of four interview questions under this category was '3.1 What does conflict mean to you?' A

total of five categories were created with each having between 4-6 interview questions. The below chart provides a visual sample of this description:

Table 4 Data Matrix

Research questions…				
Category 1	**Category 2**	**Category 3** *How is the resolution of conflict envisioned through the use of SfC programs?*	**Category 4**	**Category 5 (Observations)**
1.1	2.1	3.1 What does conflict mean to you?	4.1	5.1
1.2	2.2	3.2	4.2	5.2
⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇

Generate themes:

Next, a 'quote document' was created for each interview question from each category across all 10 NGOs. The quote document included a title, such as '3.1 What does conflict mean to you?' and two columns. The first column was named "Extracted Themes" and the second column was named "Quotes" as illustrated in the sample below:

Table 5 Quote Document

3.1 What does conflict mean to you?	
NGO 1	
Extracted Themes	*Quotes*
Summary/Theme	"….."
NGO 2	
Summary/Theme	"….."
⬇	

With this set-up in place, the researcher read each interview transcript and pulled direct quotes that provided insight into the specified interview question in each quote document. The direct quotes were placed under the Quotes column while summaries or representative themes of the quotes' meaning were added by the researcher under the Extracted Themes column.

The described organization structure enabled the researcher to have a total of twenty-four quote documents comprised of quotes and summaries/representative themes across five categories, twenty-four questions, and ten NGOs.

Code data:

Once all quote documents were completed with data, the researcher reviewed each one and teased out more concise themes for each NGO and then across all 10 NGOs so as obtain the most over-arching themes. To help with the teasing out process, the researcher asked questions such as "what is going on?", "what are people doing?", "what is the person saying?", and "what is this an example of?" (Gibbs and Taylor 2010) in order to determine which themes would accurately reflect the data. To further guard against biases, the researcher often returned to the transcript (or the audio recording) in order to revisit the full quotes and/or the context in which the quotes were mentioned.

Offer interpretations:

In a separate chart, themes were then organized under their representative categories which were turned into section headings in the findings chapter. Organization of the themes and quotes was conducted in a similar way to connecting pieces of a puzzle

so as to "tell a story" which brings "meaning and coherence…developing linkages and a story line that makes sense and is engaging to read (Marshall and Rossman 2011, 219). At times, themes and quotes that the researcher initially thought to belong under one category would fit better in another category; an occurrence that led to somewhat of a mix and match activity until the story line took on a meaning and coherence which reflected the data. The researcher remained diligent about constantly challenging the themes and interpreted meanings by returning to the interview transcripts to ensure that the data was accurately being represented.

Throughout the analysis process, the researcher recorded thematic memos on post-it notes. This strategy represented an "interplay of writing and thinking" (Marshall and Rossman 2011 quoting Knight 2002, 1) which enabled the researcher to capture thoughts or concerns as the data accumulated. Examples of content in the recorded notes generally reflected summaries of findings, thoughts on emerging sets of themes, how themes or patterns connected, new theories, and how patterns could be explained by existing theories and/or other concepts from the literature review. The use of memos helped the researcher to transition from random, coherent, and sometimes incoherent, thoughts to deeper and analytic thoughts.

Riding alongside the voices of the interviewees, represented by the data, proved to be an imperative feature of the research analysis process. The researcher found that when interpretations stayed true to the data, one interpretation would lead into another. Such a natural flow seemed to almost write itself out, through the researcher.

Search for alternative understandings:

The researcher remained cognizant to critically challenge the patterns that emerged, search for plausible explanations for the data and explore the linkages among them in the search for alternative understandings. Toward this aim, the researcher conducted several follow-up interviews with Designers and Implementers (as their availabilities permitted) to clarify and obtain further elaborations on certain thoughts there were initially shared. Second, multiple sources of information for each NGO were consulted. Sources included confidential in-house documents such as training manuals, brochures or pamphlets, descriptions offered on websites, journal articles and news articles written about the NGOs/its programs, and YouTube videos of programs. The information made available from these sources were cross-checked with data obtained from interviews and observations in order to explore tensions, alignments, and linkages.

Incorporating triangulation efforts into the data analysis helped to ensure that "real views and authentic behavior" were captured (Marshall and Rossman 2011, 221). Creswell (2007) emphasizes that "[if] themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants, then this process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study" (190).

Limitation of the Study

This study utilized a qualitative research design that incorporated three phases of exploration: initial interviews, observations, and follow-up interviews. As such, the study further benefitted from utilizing features of a case study. However, given the primarily theoretical approach taken, this research is limited in a few ways. First, an exploration into the thinking and the logic behind how and why sport is used as a vehicle through

which to address conflict and create positive change cannot lead to assertions about whether programs' intended outcomes are achieved. Second, the sample size of 10 NGOs in the Global North region prevents the ability to make large-scale generalizability of findings that are also applicable to other regions. Third, the researcher interviewed NGOs that used team sports (versus individual sports) and therefore findings might not apply to programs which use individual sports.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed the research standards established by the Research Development Integrity and Assurance (RDIA) at George Mason University for research with human subjects. The research protocols and informed consent forms were approved by the Human Subjects Review Board. The protocols ensured the voluntary nature of the study, participant confidentiality and anonymity, and further ensured that participants in the observed programs were not subjects of this study. All interviewees were free to withdraw from the interview or observation at any given time.

The researcher did have prior contact with less than a handful of the interviewees included in this study as a result of previous professional work in the SfC field. The researcher did not, however, hold any form of supervisory or evaluative role with any of the interviewees or organizations for which they work.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

Preceding chapters of this dissertation outlined the rationale, literature and research methodology underlying this exploration of SfC programs that seek to address conflict and create positive change. Chapter One presented the context and significance of this study. Chapter Two examined current literature relevant to understanding the phenomena of conflict and change, and frameworks for its analysis; ToCs that articulate assumptions and pathways of change; historic and current uses of sport as a catalyst for individual and structural change; and shifts in consciousness that lead to individual transformation. Chapter Three outlined the research design and provided the rationale for a qualitative study focused on those who design as well as those who implement SfC programs.

Chapter Four is organized into five parts. It begins with findings derived from interviews with SfC Designers (those who design curricula) and Implementers' (those who apply curricula) views on sport and conflict, then focuses more directly on Designers who are predominantly in charge of creating curricula. Finally, findings from observations and post-observation interviews with Implementers are incorporated into the discussion. Specifically, Part I explores what sport means and Part II explores what conflict means from the perspective of both Designers and Implementers. Part III

explores curricula of SfC programs and Part IV explores contributions of Implementers to SfC curricula, both from the perspective of Designers. Lastly, Part V explores the practice of Implementers through observations and post-observation interviews with them.

Part I: Exploring What Sport Means

The focus of this dissertation is to explore how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change. In doing so, the researcher interviewed a total of twenty Designers and Implementers. The following descriptions about sport were derived from thematic analysis of data collected from interviews with both Designers and Implementers, referred to as SfC actors.

How SfC Actors Think About Sport

When it comes to the term 'sport', findings revealed that the vast majority of SfC actors included in the sample of this study define the term as a fun and physical activity. With the exception of e-sports, which is outside the scope of this research, it is obvious that sport involves movement. Whether this movement involves throwing and kicking and a ball, running, or exercises that condition and strengthen the body to be able to perform specific skill sets, sport includes movement. Herein lies the belief that such physical activity is also exciting, engaging, and allows participants to feel comfortable in that space (representatives from NGO 7, 9, 10). The sport space is believed to create an "outlet" and a "release" (representative from NGO 9) while also enabling participants to freely express themselves without being bound by any limitations such as mental health traumas, violent situations at home, cultural stereotypes, and language barriers.

Aside from sport being a fun and physical activity, the data and coding system utilized in this study revealed that sport is primarily defined in terms of *what it can do*, as opposed to *what it is*, indicating a base assumption that sport can indeed be utilized as a vehicle that moves toward something. As such, it was found that sport is defined in six ways: sport connects people, sport includes competition, sport develops identity, sport involves teaching, sport "hooks" people, and finally, sport acts as a "live lab". The following section describes each of these six elements.

Sport Connects People: An overwhelming majority of the interviewees expressed that sport is about connecting with others, particularly "with people not like you" (representative from NGO 1). One of the primary components of these sport programs is to bring together groups of participants from one or more communities. These groups are not homogenous nor do they include one gender over another. They are composed of girls and boys who may, for example, come from similar socio-economic situations yet from different cultures (i.e. African-American and Hispanic). One interviewee from NGO 4 identified that the lack of opportunities to connect with others outside of one's own group (and culture) is a reason that conflict – such as behavioral issues and stereotyping – exists among youth. Through sport programming, connections resulting from sport-based experiences are believed to eventually foster a sense of "empathy" among participants (Ibid.) where greater understanding of what "fellow peers are going through day in and day out" can be gained.

The opportunity to interact with others stems from having to directly communicate with others in sport activities in order to achieve a goal (i.e. working with

teammates to score a goal). Such a way of connecting enables participants to gain a more inclusive perspective and to be, as an interviewee from NGO 9 stated, "bigger than yourself." These kinds of sport-based opportunities that create connections with others include those which foster meaningful relationships with adults, such as coaches, who have been identified as extremely powerful influencers in this interaction processes. As one interviewee from NGO 2 stated:

> I had already had a pretty solid belief that sport is a really powerful tool to build community and bring people together just based on my own experience. I mean when I was a kid I played sports year round and I would venture to say that 100 percent of my connections and friends and support system as a child were through either family or sports.

Opportunities to interact and connect with others are believed to increase through participating in SfC programs as participants automatically gain a broader network of community. For example, a representative from NGO 7 identified one situation to demonstrate this point:

> We have a student interning at a physical therapist office this summer because she's interested in that and it's like I know the physical therapist because he's a sports therapist and he's at my squash club. These different ways that you can access networks through squash is a big thing that we're only really starting to use as a tool but it's a really big one.

The ability of sport to connect with others extends beyond networking opportunities. It leads to spaces that enable people from different religions, languages, and views on history or politics to interact and share the same goal. For example, a basketball team composed of individuals from different backgrounds does more than play basketball and compete in games. The team creates a "relational hub" where parents, families and friends of the players can cheer on their own children and by extension cheer

on each other's children: "[i]n a seemingly peripheral space, they can begin to build a network of connections that will ultimately support a durable peace" (resource from NGO 5). Herein lies the assumption that spaces which encourage connection and interaction between people, especially ones of positive nature, will form the basis of a macro-level positive change.

Sport Includes Competition: Sport is believed to include competition against an opponent. This characteristic is quite obvious universally, as sport has traditionally involved one side that competes against another and where one only winner emerges; a zero-sum scenario. A representative from NGO 4 expanded to make the point that physical activity and physical fitness do not equal sport (thereby emphasizing what sport can do versus what sport is). He stated: "one thing I do think is inherent in sport is competition. I think you have physical activity, I think you have physical fitness, and then I think you have sport. I think sport involves the aspect of competition…". The same interviewee went further to provide a practical example of the pervasiveness of competition in sport: "…you say 'no, we're not keeping score' and the kids are like 'no it's 4-2'. Even in practices, the kids are always keeping score and as much as you want to try and turn that off, it's still happening."

The representative from NGO 1 echoed the insight that competition cannot be ignored in sport. Through one of their program evaluations, they learned that kids wanted to compete against other teams versus being in a group with others and competing only against themselves. The NGO responded to this feedback by creating a competition bracket which specified matches: "there was a feeling that they didn't have a team to

compete against so the bracket would add a little excitement" (representative from NGO 1).

Several of the interviewees acknowledged and emphasized that competition includes other significant components, suggesting that it can be multi-faceted and not solely zero-sum. Specifically, an interviewee from NGO 5 shared the following:

> When kids are on same teams together they're really going to bond rather than a program. When they're traveling to different places around the country and experiencing some hostility and banding together and winning and losing, that really helps cement relationships and that's just what the kids with a gang is.

While there is still the element of competition in this scenario, the difference lies in the focus area. Here, the emphasis is on the process of fostering bonds and positive experiences within and among the teammates facilitated through competition against others; therefore, sport is not only about who wins against whom but about how it is used to achieve a desired state of being, feeling, and thinking. In this way, competition can be leveraged to meet other kinds of goals beyond the goal of winning.

Sport Develops Identity: All of the interviewees had, at some point in their life, played a sport. Thirteen out of 14 total interviewees played at high school and/or collegiate level; two had played professionally for a short period of time. More so, each expressed that the interactions and experiences they gained as an athlete helped to shape parts of their personality. One interviewee shared that sport, "formed my personal identity and helped me develop into the person that I am in terms of wanting to sort of be on a team and work together with a group of like-minded individuals" (representative from NGO 2).

The identity-forming ability of sport is extremely powerful because one's experiences in sport transcend into other areas of life – and also permeates into the whole person as indicated by a representative from NGO 3 shared that:

> …sport for me was always the thing that I connected most with. As a young person all the way through school, being an athlete was the most kind of strongest sense of self that I had. It was mostly a positive thing, with it came an amount of pressure and expectation, some were self-imposed but it was I think the most effective teacher I had as a child.

The power of sport also lies in the ways in which sport creates a (new) code of conduct for the participant. An athlete may dress, behave, and make choices that are acceptable by the culture of a particular sport – or simply by virtue of being an "athlete" (representative from NGO 1). A representative from NGO 1 expanded on this point as she shared that youth who come from resident care facilities are not "bad" aggressive kids who are incapable of improving. Instead, the problem is that throughout their experiences, they have adopted a specific set of expectations which guide their perspective of self, the world around them, and any aggressive behaviors that result. Yet through sport, participants are introduced to and guided by an alternative code of conduct that oftentimes counters their dominant belief system. The interviewee expanded on this point:

> But what people are usually startled by are we have these usually violent kids, or labeled as violent, I hate the word, and we gave them bats and had no incidents. People are like "why would you give kids who are in juvenile detention or in residential care and are being physically restrained because of their violence toward themselves or others and you're handing them a bat. That doesn't make any sense. But I think it speaks to the power of sports and it also speaks to the expectations for them. So when they're in the home or care facility, there's all these feelings such as "I'm a bad kid" or "I'm struggling with all these things so I'm going to act out because that's the expectation for me" and then they go out on the field and the expectation is that they are an athlete and we talk to them that

> way. You are an athlete, you are a softball player. And no one ever in the many years we had softball ever had a problem.

Sport, therefore, is believed to act as a vehicle through which new ways of being – new cultures – can be created for those exposed to sport even in the presence of a more dominant culture.

Sport Involves Teaching: An interesting factor emerged from the interviews as interviewees spoke about what makes sport to be sport. An overwhelming majority referenced their personal and professional experiences in sport in conjunction with those learned through coaches. As each interviewee referred to their sport background, somewhere in those details was the mention of what is an effective coach. One interviewee from NGO 3 outlined specific qualities such as fairness, effective communication, setting clear expectations, and ensuring fun:

> The more positive the coaches were, the more clear they were in their expectations, the easier it was to feel motivated to achieve those things. At the time, I intuitively knew the difference between good and bad coaching and ultimately it came down to fairness, effective communication, clear expectations and then most importantly making it fun.

In another example, the interviewee from NGO 10 emphasized that one's lessons learned come hand in hand with the lessons taught by coaches:

> …when you talk to anybody who has involvement particularly as a youth in sports, they will right off the bat tell you what impact it had on them: 'Oh yeah I remember Coach so-and-so or I learned this from my involvement and it really helped prepare me for x y z.' And everybody can speak to the quality of the experience and how it affected them.

Such insights help to understand that participants do not simply participate in sport. They engage in a give-and-take interaction that is guided and oftentimes driven by

coaches. The role of coaches is fundamental to shaping one's identity, the connections created, the skillsets developed, and the drive for competition (healthy or otherwise).

Thus far sport has been described through its ability to connects others, to include competition, develop new identity, and to include a teaching element through the role of coaches. Two other noteworthy descriptions emerged from the data: the ability of sport to "hook" people and its ability to act as a "live lab".

Sport "Hooks" People: It is difficult to step into a community, of which one is not a member, and offer services that one believes will address the community's needs and create positive change. This method is oftentimes met with resistance because it is fraught with assumptions about the community, its needs and wants, its ways of being (i.e. culture). Such a method is ultimately prescriptive and lacks the foundation upon which trust and change can be cultivated. There are NGOs that understand the resistance and mistrust with which they would be faced in the described scenario, and as a way to work around these realities they utilize sport.

An overwhelming majority of the interviewees in this research study stated that sport is used as a hook to draw participants into their program, which is primarily composed of both sport and non-sport components. The opportunity to participate in sport is leveraged as a means through which to attract and also retain the interest of participants in their non-sport services that include, but are not limited to, mentorship, academic tutoring, poetry and writing lessons, health and wellness classes, lessons in leadership and community service. In this way, NGO representatives believe that individuals have access to a wide range of options in life and are better equipped to

contribute positively to society (i.e. employability, self-development, mental health, academic excellence/advancement). The hooking strategy through sport emerged from the data as an emphasized concept. An interviewee from NGO 4 stated that:

> …soccer standpoint, I think that's the hook, it's a great way. Most of the kids come into our program because they're attracted to soccer but it's the ways that we engage kids outside of the soccer field too that mean a lot to me and that's in the classroom, in the community.

Here we see an example where soccer is utilized as a way to attract participants during an after-school program. Once 'hooked,' the non-sport components such as classes in poetry and writing are utilized to diversify the participants' skill set.

A representative from NGO 7 echoed the same concept by sharing, "here, sport is the hook, it's what we hope kids attach to." Referring to their squash program, this NGO uses a traditionally unavailable sport for the African-American community as a way to diversify participants' skill sets. Outside of the time spent on the squash court, the NGO offers its participants opportunities in academic mentoring and community service during after-school hours in order to increase their chances of employability and/or acceptance into college. The interviewee expanded to add that their ability to hook kids into the program is beneficial in more than one layer of society; it benefits the individual and the community through the organization's support of schools:

> So we also see the opportunity to combine athletics and coaching with mentoring and academic coaching, so using squash as a motivator to get students on a pathway like I was saying towards success for when they graduate high school. Those are all things that the schools have difficulty tracking kids with and we see ourselves as providing a major resource to our school partner and adding that extra layer of support to our students.

Lacrosse is another sport that is considered to be an elitist sport and traditionally unavailable to populations living in lower socio-economic communities. NGO 9 provides opportunities that increase access to lacrosse while also empowering participants through its non-sport activities. Its representative stated:

> …sport really isn't a huge component to it, it's just that that's what we know and so we're able to teach it and work with the kids in it. And I do think that it helps that the sport is a lot of fun. We're very blessed that if you go to lacrosse practice, you're going to have fun. And so we're able to kind of use the sport as our hook to get the kids involved in our program.

Once participants are hooked, they remain in the program and are able to benefit from having access to mentorship opportunities, to learning about pro-social skills and characteristics that ensure success on and off the field such as sportsmanship, communication, and teamwork. An interviewee from NGO 7 shared an instance that demonstrates one way in which hooking is used to teach non-sport lessons, specifically responsibility:

> Here, sports is the hook, it's what we hope kids attach to, and it's the window for us to coach students on a whole variety of life lessons. Even something as simple as showing up, attendance, we're working with a student just today who just came and showed up expecting to be at summer camp. We haven't seen her in four months so like, what's the expectation there? What happens if you have a job, she'll be graduating next year. You think your job is still gonna be here?

There is, however, a flip side to the coin when using sport in a manner to hook and retain participants. An interviewee from NGO 4 does not view such a strategy to be positive. This interviewee stated that "it's like we're tricking the kids to come into the program." A representative from NGO 6 chimed on to state that "I think using it as a hook, it's almost like tricking someone to take medicine", and he went further to say:

> …it's not that we have to be tricked into thinking, 'well, I like playing basketball so I have a vested interest in the issue.' There's a oneness in terms of being able to utilize - there's a value to have an integrated approach that allows for kids to understand the interconnectedness of things.

In other words, the participants should have a "vested interest" in all components of the program and not solely in sport. This perspective argues that participants should have (or develop) an interest in, for example, academic success or learning skills that increase chances of employability or learning about healthy habits. Such a perspective suggests that beyond hooking and offering non-sport components, SfC NGOs should cultivate a sense of understanding among its participants about what and how the program teaches can add value to the participants' lives. To do so, it requires that SfC actors themselves must understand, articulate, and communicate the conflict they are attempting to address.

The final description of sport which emerged from the data was the ability of sport to act as a live laboratory. Across the board, interviewees expressed hope that the sport and non-sport skills offered through their programming will carry over into other areas of the participants' life. To aid in this transference, NGOs attempt to create an environment through sport where they can experience and also experiment with positive skills and relationships.

An interviewee from NGO 1 emphasized that "sport is a live lab" and "life in action." This NGO works to destigmatize mental health and promote skills such as resiliency, emotional regulation, and leadership, among others. The interviewee explained that sport enables participants to practice life skills, as they would a sport technique, within the sport space. The hope is that when these participants encounter

emotionally tense situations elsewhere, such as in school or in the home, they will have already exercised the ability to react positively:

> So when they take these skills and go out into the world, they've actually tried it out before. So you're working on conflict resolution, so those problem solving skills and those abilities to self regulate which are important, it's not like they're first time ever trying it. It's like if someone punched them in the face and do they punch back or do I turn away - they've already tried that in the group or hopefully 20 times.

The kind of social-emotional learning (guided by coaches) enabled in the sport space is believed to be unique because it is not believed to be replicable in others spaces. The freedom of expression allowed through physical movement and openness of space outweighs, for example, the confined spaces of a therapist's room and the expectation that a serious conversation must take place. The interview from NGO 1 continued to build on this point:

> Rather than talking with a therapist about how maybe that wasn't the best choice you should try this choice, it's really hard for a kid to reflect back on a conversation. But if they remember, oh when I was playing basketball and was actually calm in that moment and I got praised for that and everything was OK, I can remember that in the playground.

She stated further:

> And so the active integration of their learning is not gonna happen in an individual therapy nor is it going to happen in art therapy or photography or anything like that. It's a special way of integrating the live action that sport programs have.

The program at NGO 4 has a different structure and works with a population with different needs than NGO 1, but it also uses sport as a live laboratory. The representative emphasized that lessons about sharing, teamwork, and trust learned through sport is not

replicable in other spaces, such as in traditional classroom settings. He stated the following to make this point:

> …the level of trust, the level of teamwork that happens through physical spaces - it's tough to really put a direct correlation of that type of team building that happens through sport and direct experience into a classroom context.

The best one can do, he emphasized, is to "mimic" or "artificially create some of those things in the classroom" (representative from NGO 4). The same representative suggested that the experiences in sport, along with the physicality component, enables participants to exercise a unique sense of agency:

> But at the end of the day, physical activity and the opportunity to really be on your own and make your own decisions and have that real deep agency happens through experience on the field. That's a learning experience in and of itself.

The physicality element was also emphasized by the representative from NGO 6 who utilizes 'play' instead of sport. The representative believes that when people engage in physical movement, they are getting to be their "purest self" similar to how babies communicate through their movements in order to learn, grow, and connect with others. He stated the following to explain this sentiment:

> I think that play, I honestly believe as a human being that play always represents change. Like our ability to grow and learn and thrive. That when we're playing, we're getting to be our purest self. And that we innately seek connection with others in that space…When we are playing, we get to be our purest self and we innately seek connection with others in this space. Our ability to learn, grow, and thrive. There isn't a lot of difference between the meaning of play among adults and kids – adults return to that state place where anything is possible and we can effectively engage with something that seems hard. Like when we were babies - it's how we communicated and made sense of what was around us.

His reference that "play always represents change" is grounded in the belief that play, like how sport is used by other NGOs in the sample of this study, allows for freedom of

self-expression which in turn enables opportunities for change. Specifically, though, play can colloquially be understood as games that may include rules or an unstructured game of catch, running, or other kinds of movement. Play can also involve an end goal as well as the element of competition. Where play is seen to be different than sport, according to the representative from NGO 6 is that the former is not institutionalized, does not require the participant to have any athletic abilities, and therefore enables a broader population to be included in conflict and change initiatives:

> You know like sport is readily accessible because it's ubiquitous but I think that play opens it up to a more broad population. If I don't view myself as athletic good at soccer, I don't feel removed from a conversation about community, community-building or community values. You know? I feel like if we're only focused on sport, while it can be an entry point because, while the large percentage of the population isn't, we stand to exclude people too. So I think that by opening up our definition of play we're able to involve more folks in the conversation.

The representative emphasized that most NGOs operate "narrowly through the lens of competitive sport" which is problematic because it excludes kids who cannot engage in sport and "who also experience trauma". Play addresses this problem by opening up the definition of sport outside of the traditional structure, rules and regulations so as to increase accessibility and inclusivity for a broader population of individuals. In this way, sport is viewed as a subset of play. However, other interviewees have specified the opposite, where play is a subset of sport. For example, an interviewee from NGO 5 stated that "any type of play activity would fall under that [sport] umbrella for me."

In summary, sport is primarily defined in terms of *what it can do*, as opposed to *what it is*. Sport is believed to have the ability to connect people, include competition, develop new identity, involve teaching, attract people, and it has the ability to act as a

space where social-emotional skills and life skills can be exercised. More pointedly, two key assumptions emerged from the descriptions of sport. The first is that these abilities can indeed be used as a vehicle to create positive change at the individual level – change believed to help participants navigate through conflict. The second assumption is that the physicality of sport is believed to be the fundamental piece that allows for the freedom of expression through which individuals are able to exercise agency, despite existing phenomena such as conflict.

With regard to sport versus play and as it relates to addressing conflict and creating positive change, the open-structured nature of play is believed to promote greater accessibility and inclusivity for broader populations. However, there is no consensus on benefits of play over sport, or vice versa among SfC actors included in this study.

With a better understanding of what sport means, the discussion turns to exploring why sport is connected with the phenomenon of conflict from the vantage point of those who utilize sport to address conflict – SfC actors.

Sport as the Lens Through Which Conflict is Viewed

This study explored how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change. Findings revealed that sport is primarily defined in terms of *what it can do*, as opposed to *what it is*. In this section, the discussion explores why sport is connected with the phenomenon of conflict from the vantage point of those who utilize sport to address conflict – SfC actors. Thematic coding structure of this study enabled for a deeper understanding of the link between first-hand sport experiences of SfC actors' in relation to their path into the SfC field. Key insights which emerged was that SfC actors,

all of whom were once high school athletes, collegiate athletes, and/or professional athletes, possess a belief in the replicability of sport's benefits for others. This belief is grounded in a deep sense of sport-identity that emerged from the personal stories of the SfC actors. Functionally, however, the sense of sport-identity went beyond possessing a strong sense of familiarity or connection to sport as an athlete (versus as a fan or spectator). It meant that interviewees would relate their non-sport experiences with experiences from playing sport, and vice versa. In other words, sport's benefits became the lens through which they viewed conflict in the world and its solutions. Several of the personal stories that describe this relation are presented below.

The representative from NGO 1 played soccer as a collegiate athlete and had selected an academic program because it fit well with the demanding training schedule required to play at that level of sport. After college, the interviewee pursued college coaching but soon came to the realization that it was not the ideal role: "I thought I'd love it because that's what I had done my whole life…I was confused and didn't know what it was all about and so realized that I didn't enjoy it because I was using people and players to win games." Clarity came when two players shared with the interviewees that they were suffering from anorexia and bulimia, two kinds of eating disorders.

> I didn't know that at the time but they were my players and I sort of went against the difficulty of "I don't know how to help you." So I ended up at a residential treatment facility for girls who had been sexually traumatized and exploited and I was suddenly like, this is what I want to do. A lot of people in my life were surprised, asking how is this what you want to do.

Being confronted with the realities of mental health disorders was the turning point for the interviewee. While she did not know how to help her players at the time, she

did recognize that relationships developed between coaches/mentors and players serve as a critical space for extremely private and vulnerable conversations to take place. Such insights inspired the pursuit of degrees in sport psychology and mental health counseling, which the interviewee utilizes in her work to leverage sport as the vehicle through which mental health services are offered to youth in underserved communities.

The representative from NGO 2 had a similar kind of turning point. Growing up in the United States, the interviewee had "never been exposed to sort of the reality of the hardships of life for many people in the world." It was on a trip to Indonesia that the interviewee was able to witness the effects of environmental disasters:

> So we were in Jakarta during a period of flooding and we drove through some areas where a lot of the homes were really devastated by the flooding and just sort of observing, that kind of opened my eyes to I guess my passion which has become working, you know, for justice globally.

The awareness of an "alternative reality" encouraged the interviewee to pursue high education in international development, social policy and management, conflict management, and youth programming while also taking more opportunities to travel abroad to East Africa and South America. The combination of such experiences inspired the interviewee to work with refugee populations in the United States. Yet there was one integral piece that seemed to be missing in the equation:

> I have a background of playing sports and I recognize the power of sports to bring people together and to build community as well as to sort of help kids develop skills that are useful obviously off the field or court as well.

Sport was the missing piece. The interviewee related her sport-based experiences as a solution capable to bridge divides and create a sense of community for refugees – as sport had done for her. Eventually, the interviewee moved into a program director

position to develop curricula using soccer and other community building services to integrate incoming refugee populations in their new communities.

In another example, the representative from NGO 3 played soccer throughout college as a collegiate athlete and later in a professional league for a short while. Although declared a pre-med student, the interviewee decided to travel overseas to continue to play soccer while also gain experience working in marginalized communities and "connecting with youth in these different places." The interviewee expanded:

> I was looking for some travel opportunities…thought it was a perfect fit—some international travel, stay involved in the game, and kind of would give me a good experience if I did choose to go back to medical school…And through that process I really found that I enjoyed working in some of these kinds of marginalized communities and with youth, especially connecting with the youth in these different places. And you know as corny as it sounds, soccer really is its own language and the ability to go and use this sport as a way of communicating and really gathering sport and building community is a phenomenal tool.

During his time overseas, the interviewee had the opportunity to design a public health campaign that involved sport as a major component of the curriculum. The experience enabled the interviewee to "stay involved in the game" and to witness how sport (soccer) acts as "its own language" when addressing conflict through fostering communication and building community.

The representative from NGO 5 grew up playing basketball, both as a child and throughout college as a collegiate athlete. With a background in international affairs and monitoring and evaluation of education and peacebuilding programs, the interviewee worked for a while in the Middle East, where she saw the need for communication and relationship-building between divided groups. Relating back to the benefits she gained as

an athlete – connecting with others, teamwork, and building meaningful relationships, she accepted a position that enabled her to utilize sport as the vehicle to address conflict in the area.

The representative from NGO 9 was a collegiate and professional athlete. Shortly after this time, the interviewee accepted a government related job, only to shift back to working in the sport space after seeing the need for quality sport instruction in high schools in low-income communities. The interviewee shared that, "the kids needed to be re-taught how to play lacrosse" (representative from NGO 9). This experience inspired him to increase access to the game, a traditionally "elitist" sport as stated while also helping youth to develop character skills and life lessons necessary to succeed on and off the sport field – similar to those he had gained through the sport as a child in his small hometown to a top-tiered university in his adult life. Once more, there exists a connection between sport and non-sport experiences, where the former serves as the lens through which SfC actors, despite their varying stories, view conflict and its solutions.

The experiences of representative from NGO 8 and NGO 4 also demonstrate this such a connection. The interviewee from NGO 8 played on a boys' soccer team because a girls' team did not exist during her childhood. For her, continuing to play sport throughout the following years and as a collegiate athlete was one way to push back against gendered discrimination for future generations. Referring to soccer, she emphasized that its "…really one of my first passions in life and a second passion has been really looking to support and empower youth, really thinking about the next generation." Similarly, the interviewee from NGO 4 grew up playing baseball, including

a season overseas after college. For him, the experiences gained from being an athlete was directly correlated to the value and life lessons that a coach brings to the table – highlighting again the importance of the coach-athlete relationship expressed above by the interviewee from NGO 1. This belief led the interviewee to shift his career in journalism to working with youth in underserved communities through sport.

In summary, throughout the interviews with the SfC actors in this study, it became evident that sport is more than about influencing career choices. The first-hand benefits that interviewees gained as athletes became so much a part of their personal development that the stated benefits (i.e. trust, communication, relationship building, community-building) are believed to be replicable for others who play sport. More specifically though, sport had acted as such a positive empowering theme in their individual lives, albeit in slightly different ways, that it became the dominant lens through which solutions to unfulfilled needs in society were viewed (i.e. mental health, lack of education, discrimination). In this way, sport is believed to act as a powerful and effective vehicle through which to address conflict and create positive change – starting at the individual level. An Implementer from NGO 6 emphasized this point succinctly:

> Yeah, I grew up playing baseball, I was a competitive swimmer. In high school I played baseball, I swam, I ran cross country, playing water polo in college so yeah sport was a really important part of my experience and I think that's the big connector for anyone into our work.

Part II: Exploring What Conflict Means

In Part I of this Chapter, the study explored how SfC actors think about sport, as well as how, through their personal stories, sport has become the lens through which conflict is viewed. It was found that SfC actors define sport primarily in terms of what it

can do, as opposed to what it is. Along these lines, SfC actors believe in the replicability of sport's benefits; benefits which are related to their own personal development and identity, and which has shaped how they view conflict and its solutions.

Part II of this Chapter begins with findings on how SfC actors think about conflict. Subsequent sections describe findings derived from interviews with Designers given their primary role in creating curricula. Specifically, the sections describe how Designers assess context and its challenges with respect to program participants, and what SfC programs do to address conflict.

How SfC Actors Think About Conflict

Conflict is a complex phenomenon that can take different meanings. It can also be expressed at various levels of society from the individual, societal, international and global. Given its complexity, the more conflict is understood the better positioned intervention programs such as SfC programs, can be designed to address its causes and work toward resolution. To understand how and why SfC actors utilize sport to address conflict, it is important to learn about their conceptualization of this phenomenon. Several interviewees identified that as a program they have no set definition of what is conflict. In fact, the term conflict was used interchangeably with "issue" and "challenge". Further discussions with SfC actors regarding the ways in which issues/challenges/conflicts are viewed helped to identify three perceptions: conflict is a form of harm, conflict is an opportunity for individual growth, and conflict is lack of access.

Conflict is a form of harm: Some interviewees expressed that conflict is a form of harm. Harm was primarily spoken of in terms of a threatening physical situation and as

harboring self-inflicting negative beliefs. It was also expressed that such conflict creates cycles from which it is hard to break out. The representative from NGO 1 stated that "our kids are in a world full of conflict and they're just trapped in the middle of everything. Especially the little ones, it's just so unfair."

Conflict as a form of harm was also related to the learned ways of behaving that are promoted by the communities in which parties live. A representative from NGO 9 shared that while they have no set definition of conflict, their understanding of it has been shaped by ground experiences such as through the "physical altercations" and participant reactions that take place on the sport field. The representative pointed out that such potentially harmful scenarios quickly escalate because of learned behaviors which dictate how to respond when parties simply "can't agree or get along." Another interviewee from NGO 4 echoed that "conflict is when someone is really at risk and when there is immediate harm to their well-being."

There is also the viewpoint of conflict as harm that is inflicted on the self. A few NGO representatives expressed that conflict is driven by one's belief in self. This belief suggests that for SfC actors, conflict also exists at an internal level and can be linked to feelings of self-worth, self-confidence and a sense of empowerment – all areas in which SfC actors attempt to improve through their sport-based programs. One's belief in self, whether positive or negative, can be reinforced by those who surround the individual. For example, in reference to this point and kids living in underserved communities, the interviewee from NGO 10 shared:

> It's that the kids tend to have low expectations placed on them. No one expects them to do well and to succeed, to be able to get along, and to be

> leaders and to choose for themselves, to make the right choices, whether it's choosing to walk away from a conflict or choosing to discuss it or to accept or question.

While SfC actors may not rely heavily or consult formal bodies of knowledge on conflict, they remain true to relying on ground experiences to understand its nature and incorporate insights into their programming. Such a finding further supports the relevance of conducting observations, as incorporated in this research study.

Although SfC actors did identify structural factors such as poverty and violence as conflict that inhibits the well-being of citizens, a key component of their understanding of conflict is that it is an internal phenomenon at the individual level. Their programs, therefore, focus heavily on individuals (intra-relational) and interactions between individuals (inter-relational).

Conflict is opportunity for individual growth: When using the term 'conflict' in conversations with many of the SfC actors, they were quick to point out that generally speaking this term represents a negative connotation, as in something that inflicts harm or that cannot be resolved. From example, one interviewee from NGO 7 said the following with a determined tone in her voice: "Conflict is an interesting word because I don't ever see it as conflict, I see it as the challenges." Rather, interviewees offered that conflict represents an opportunity for growth with the implication that such growth is positive and good for all parties involved.

Several NGO representatives emphasized that conflict provides an opportunity, a process through which one can learn about him/herself and also about others – self and relational awareness. For example, the interviewee from NGO 6 shared:

> I believe it represents an opportunity for growth. When we're engaging with conflict, it's a challenge two parties are facing and there's an opportunity for folks to come together and learn about someone else and themselves in the process.

Such a learning process was likened to a challenge on the sport field. There, one has to embark in a process to work through obstacles in order to become a better, stronger, faster version of themselves while also learning to work alongside teammates and opponents. An Implementer from NGO 7 stated that he believes "conflict is a challenge that can either defeat a person or push them to grow." The use of a sport metaphor to explain that conflict is an opportunity for growth is suggestive that SfC actors relate non-sport experiences with sport experiences, reaffirming this finding in Part I of this Chapter.

SfC actors stressed that although there are no guarantees for what might result, conflict is a consistent feature in life and choosing to respond to it is better than not engaging. Along these lines, the representative from NGO 8 shared the following:

> I think conflict can be a source of change. And a lot of people are nervous or fearful of change but change is the only thing that is consistent in life. I think when you think about working in underserved communities or think about anything that is kind of entrepreneurial or innovative or you know…you have to do something to create change to make that positive impact and I think oftentimes that that can be a hard step for people to take…

More than just responding to conflict as a way to promote growth and create positive change, a few SfC actors suggested that the importance of looking past surface-level manifestation of conflict in order to understand it and be well positioned to intervene. For example, the representative from NGO 1 provides mental health services for youth suffering from conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She

shared that, “the one thing we preach is that we tell people that kids are trying their very very best to survive, so always use that lens and always think about their behavior as communication to you.” Learning to decipher (versus reacting to) all kinds of positive and negative communications, such as language or behavior, provides insights which can help interveners to understand what is happening beyond the surface level.

This point suggests that conflict can be observed and intervened by remaining aware of external actions (verbal, physical) that serve as cues and through which positive growth – positive change – can be cultivated. From this level of understanding, it then becomes possible to design appropriate responses, ones that “use compassion, empathy, openness.” Expanding on this perspective and in reference to the kids, the interviewee from NGO 1 stated:

> They may not be able to use words the way you would want them to but they’re telling you about the conflict that is going on their life. Their brain as a child is designed to keep them alive. So whether they’re stealing, arguing, fighting, biting, whatever they are doing is because they are trying to keep alive.

Yet another critical point emerged when discussing conflict as an opportunity for growth. In order for any growth to happen, some SfC actors indicated that there has to be a certain level of acknowledgement that conflict exists. For example, the representative from NGO 6 highlighted that such an acknowledgement can determine the success of an SfC program. He stated this point quite clearly:

> You know because there’s plenty of communities where they are still having to recognize that there is challenge, that something feels wrong, and I think we’ve found the greatest level of success with the program with folks who on a readiness to change scale they’re feeling ready, they’ve identified that there is a challenge and they want to engage.

In summary, SfC actors chose to view conflict as an opportunity to foster individual growth. The ways in which such growth can be cultivated are dependent on acknowledging that "challenge" exists, on taking the chance to engage, and on remaining attuned to surface-level communications (i.e. cues) so as to intervene in ways that effectively address underlying causes of the situation.

Conflict is lack of access: While conflict has been identified as a form of harm (primarily at the individual level) and as an opportunity to foster individual growth, SfC actors also expressed that conflict is lack of access to resources and opportunities which are necessary to fulfill basic needs of belonging, safety, and others in order to break out of negative cycles. They stressed that addressing lack of access is key to ensuring the success of youth, oftentimes pointing out that they themselves were fortunate enough to have many opportunities in and through sport while growing up. Herein lies continued evidence which support findings of this study that SfC actors relate their sport experiences with non-sport experiences.

To explain what conflict as a lack of access means, the representative from NGO 2 shared that despite the city's police and leadership officials priding themselves on creating a welcoming environment, they have in reality demonstrated the opposite for newcomers. The representative explained that the refugee and immigrant populations experience much difficulty as they try to safely settle into their new homes, in a new country. She went on to explain:

> We are one of the sort of first cities to sign on to the welcoming movement. And we have city policies that are welcoming to newcomers. But on the ground experience of our newcomer families is not quite aligned with that policy. So that's an issue and I think many newcomers

> have experienced bullying and discrimination and assault and robbery. They're you know targeted specifically because they're newcomers, they're thought to be easy targets because they can't necessarily communicate exactly what happened as easily as a fluent English speaker. Many of our communities come with a different experience of police community relations and don't necessarily go to the police with issues.

The interviewee expressed that without access to language development skills and a supportive network – offered as components of their SfC program which also engages the participants' families – the refugee and immigrant population will continue to be at risk for attacks. Ultimately, such attacks decrease the new families' sense of belonging and safety, and space spaces, while also increasing the City's crime statistics.

The representative from NGO 3 referenced the importance of increasing access to safe spaces for youth in particular. The organization built a facility in an underserved community and through offering sport, academic tutoring, and mentoring services, kids from this neighborhood are able to have access to positive mentors and productive after school programs. Such programs are believed to keep youth off the streets while also helping them to obtain positive character skills necessary to succeed in life. The representative emphasized that:

> We built a facility in a neighborhood where there aren't resources like it because place is important. This is a place where you don't have to convince people where its worth coming to because there is so much you can do here. But it doesn't matter if there isn't good programming here. So yeah it's about resources but ultimately it's about lack of access to opportunity.

Similarly, the representative from NGO 4 shared the following:

> We're really trying to provide an opportunity that you would think is something that every kid has an opportunity to be a part of, and that's being a part of a team, having an opportunity to represent their school, their community, and build relationships and be a part of a group that goes

> beyond their own, whatever's happening in their lives…without our program, not only would many of our kids not have a social group that they can connect with, but they wouldn't have the opportunity to find success and to really grow as youth and as young adults in a way that our coaches are able to provide.

A few representatives highlighted a recognition that their efforts to address lack of access can only go so far when they themselves have limited access to other parts of participants' life. For example, a representative from NGO 9 stated that:

> I think a lot of our kids probably deal with conflict often that we have no control over. Conflicts in their life, conflicts with their parents, conflicts with their teachers, and that we unfortunately don't have that much access to as we would like…

In summary, SfC actors perceive conflict as primarily an internal phenomenon within and between individuals that can manifest as a form of harm (lack of belief in self), and as an opportunity for individual growth. Conflict is also perceived as a structural phenomenon that translates as a lack of access to resources and opportunities which prevent the fulfillment of basic human needs. These perceptions underpin SfC actors' programs which they believe are helping individuals to succeed and create positive change.

How Designers Assess Context and Its Challenges

Exploring SfC actors' conceptualization of conflict is a necessary component for understanding how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address it. Findings in this study revealed that conflict is understood in three ways: as an intra- and inter-relational phenomenon at the individual level that can manifest as a form of harm; as an opportunity for growth; and as a structural phenomenon that translates as a lack of access to resources and opportunities. Given that these three perceptions underpin SfC

programs, it is further necessary to understand from where Designers (those chiefly in charge of creating curricula) obtain information about the issues and concerns it seeks to address, in the context of where program participants come from.

Discussions with interviewees, as well as review of documents that were available on websites and those shared with the researcher revealed two primary sources that serve to inform Designers: official statistical information and assessments led by the NGOs. Discussions further revealed that SfC programs are mostly focused on obtaining information about conflict as a lack of access to resources and opportunities.

The representative from NGO 3 uses baseball and softball as vehicles to foster positive character development, academic achievement, and improved health for youth. The NGO highlights the "shocking statistics" regarding the neighborhoods where participants live, specifying how more than 70% of elementary school students receive failing test scores in math and reading. Aside from low test scores in fundamental skills, staying in school is a challenge for youth in the neighborhoods. From a pool of 8th grade graduates, 60% are said to drop out of school by tenth grade. But low academic success is not the only area that show shocking statistics. Almost half of the youth population is obese, with limited access to healthy eating options; and violent and property crime rates are also among the highest in the city.

In their aim to provide mental health services to youth in underserved communities, NGO 1 also looks to statistical information to learn more about what lack of access means. Approximately 98% of their participants are served through the state

insurance; an entity that has become the NGO's reference guide for learning more about the conditions of each participant. The representative shared the following:

> …we don't necessarily ask them about their financial situation but by nature of being on … [insurance] we do naturally know that they are having some kind of financial hardship.

The representative from NGO 7 shared that they rely on statistics from several sources, such as those from the city, United States Department of Health, Pew Research Center, and the American Academy of Pediatricians, among others. The organization used to rely heavily on the demographics of the schools with which they partner to deliver their sport-based curriculum to youth. One key indicator for economic need was free and reduced lunch and the NGO used to "just rely on the fact that the…school was like 80% free or reduced lunch and that's huge." However, sometimes new state laws limit the amount of personal information that is available to external sources. The representative from NGO 7 highlighted the need to (as a staff) adjust their information-gathering approaches in order to learn about what lack of access means for their target population:

> …so I think this coming year I'm actually going to request economic data when students try out because every once in a while you do have the outlier and the family that's making 90 grand and yet they're at a [low-income] school or they're at a public school, and there was never a way for us to screen for that so I think I'm going to make it more, like in the recruitment materials it's gonna say…only for families that make below "x." And we've had debates on staff about this because even though a family might be making 80 or 90 thousand dollars, our students are still living in neighborhoods where just by walking out the front door you're in a high crime neighborhood…

NGO 9 is another example of an organization that utilizes external statistics, such as those made available by participating Title 1 schools. Its representative stated:

> …depending on the year about 70-80% of our kids participating attend Title 1 schools which mean that 70% or more of students at those schools get full lunch, full meals basically which technically we're all below the poverty line which I'm trying to say in a nice way.

Although they do not request financial information from the kids as a prerequisite for acceptance into their SfC program, NGO 9 does make use of other factors, such as general conditions of the locations in which they work, and the expressed priorities of parents/guardians of the participants. The representative shared an observation that those looking for free services are typically those who come from low-income communities.

NGO 2 also works in locations where local community members experience financial hardships, among other kinds. For example, the organization uses statistical information from the city to learn about the "strapped" financial conditions and declining literacy rates of the school system. The representative referenced that low remedial reading and math interventions are needed for over three quarter of high school graduates in the city.

> …our school system is facing multimillion dollar shortfalls. You know a 130-million-dollar budget gaps. Our school system to begin with hasn't always been very effective. I think there was a study a few years ago I think 2014 that came out that the vast majority like over three quarter of students who graduate [the city's] high schools require remedial reading and math interventions before they can be successful in college level courses.

By providing tutoring opportunities in these subject areas, the organization's SfC program is one way that it believes to be helping youth to improve their academic skills while also addressing the city's low statistics.

While SfC programs included in this study identify sport as the key component that addresses conflict at the individual level, they also supplement sport with add-on

components that are believed to address conflict at the structural level, such as improving access to mental health services, character development skills, and education. Information that dictates what kinds of supplemental components are necessary is statistical data that identifies what lack of access means in certain target communities. As stated by a few interviewees, such information also helps to prove that their target population is, in fact, in need of their services.

Aside from collecting statistical information, NGOs conduct their own assessments in order to understand what is happening in the communities they work as well as identify which components to include in their programs. For example, NGO 5 undertook a context analysis that included interviews with the organization's local staff and residents in six cities in which they work. Additionally, interviews were conducted with teachers, youth participants, parents, police officers, non-profit and recreation center leaders, and local government officials and activists. Their study found that among the most critical issues that divide urban communities in the U.S. are race, economics, geography (i.e., where you live), stereotyping (particularly those of police and residents) and education. Interestingly, the same five factors were also found to be important ways of creating meaningful connection with others because "they contribute to shared lived experiences of residents." Factors that were found to hinder youth development included a lack of access to after-school programming, limited role models, and lack of in-school resources, as well as opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills.

Using the findings from this internally-led study, the organization aligned their program services to include necessary services that address the need for access and

resources among youth in their target cities. Specifically, they focused on providing safe spaces where youth are exposed to new opportunities and experiences; bringing together youth across major divides (such as race and neighborhood); and helping youth to develop leadership skills.

NGO 1 conducts its own assessments as well but in a different capacity. Instead of collecting numeric data, it utilizes a "bio psycho social assessment" as the primary initial means of learning more about the mental health of each participant. The interviewee stated that they "don't necessarily collect a lot of data in terms of numeric data." What they do collect, however, is descriptive information about the conditions surrounding each participant and the ways in which they contribute to his/her overall well-being (or not). While lack of access to mental health services is one reason why each participant is referred to the program by a school counselor, teacher, or parent/guardian, other contributing factors are revealed through the bio psycho social assessment. Explaining what exactly is a bio psycho social assessment, the representative from NGO 1 stated:

> …so what that is, our staff sit down with the child and parents/guardian and we go through mental health assessment and we talk to them about their educational needs, their past history of mental health, and there is a section around trauma, so there are some questions about "have you ever experienced trauma or what is it like to live in this community" and things like that, so that's where community violence usually comes up. So things like I have witnessed domestic violence, I've heard gun shots. Bullying comes up too which I would personally put in community violence category and that where it gets noted in narrative form and it goes to the child's health record for every kid.

The representative expressed that utilizing such an assessment provides them with available and systematic tool for each and every one of their participants which keeps

their information connected to any changing conditions/needs of the communities in which their participants live.

In the case of NGO 2, internally conducted assessments are conducted informally with participants through discussions with their refugee/immigrant participants. These assessments help to identify the participants' specific needs and locally-sensitive information. For example, refugees/immigrants receive specialized services from entities such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC) for resettlement. While their assistance helps them to find homes and employment, it has also created a sense of resentment among the locals in the community. The locals' perceptions are that such aid should be provided toward their own needs and that resources are being unfairly distributed.

NGO 6 works with adult educators/community leaders working in school systems in underserved communities. Their work focuses on addressing a lack of access to resources and opportunities that prevent adult educators from delivering quality education and, in turn, affect their students from receiving quality education. To learn about this conflict in the context of where program participants come from, NGO 6 conducts a "needs assessment" with each incoming cohort. The assessment is used to learn more about what the specific community members are identifying to be the "challenges," how they are defining them, and what they feel is necessary to find solutions – an attempt to understand the implicit, local knowledge of participants.

In summary, statistical data and internally-led assessments are two primary methods used by NGOs to obtain information about the issues and concerns they seek to address, in the context of where program participants live. Statistical data provides NGOs

with factual information while assessments provide implicit first-hand knowledge that enable Designers to learn what lack of access means within participants' specific context, how it affects their livelihood, and their individual needs. Such an approach toward collecting information makes sense given that Designers actors view conflict to be an individual and structural phenomenon, in which can be intervened to foster positive change.

Information gathered by Designers through statistical data and assessments is utilized to identify which add-on components are needed and that supplement the use of sport for addressing conflict. In this sense, sport is regarded as an appropriate vehicle because it serves as an access pass. For the participants, it gains them entrance into programs to which they may not have been exposed to previously, and for Designers sport provides an insiders' access into communities and the locally-specific knowledge that comes with it.

What Designers Do to Address Conflict

This study explored how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change. The coding structure of the study led to findings that show sport is primarily defined in terms of what it can do, as opposed to what it is. Sport is believed to have the ability to connect people, include competition, develop identity, involve teaching, attract people, and the ability to act as a space where social-emotional skills and life skills can be exercised. The physicality of sport is assumed to be the fundamental piece that allows for the freedom of expression through which individuals are able to exercise agency, despite the existence of conflict. Conflict, as perceived by

SfC actors, is an intra- and inter-relational phenomenon at the individual level that manifests as a form of harm; an opportunity for growth; and a structural phenomenon that translates as a lack of access to resources and opportunities and that prevents the fulfillment of basic human needs. How SfC programs address conflict is determined by obtaining context-specific knowledge of participants and the communities in which participants live, mostly through statistical data and assessments.

So, what do SfC programs do to address conflict? In the SfC curricula included in this research study, sport and non-sport components are paired to improve access to services and opportunities. Findings revealed that such a pairing is believed to create effective safe spaces that further addresses conflict perceived at the individual level, as a form of harm, and as an opportunity for individual growth. This is described below.

Improving Access by Pairing Sport and Non-Sport Components

The vast majority of NGOs offer free after-school programs that include sport and non-sport components. While sport is used as an 'access pass' referenced above through which to attract and retain participants in SfC programs, non-sport components are used to enhance the benefits gained through sport. For example, NGO 7 provides access to sport and also weaves in social support services between training and games as a key part of the curriculum. The organization believes that its combined efforts reduce feelings of "hopelessness" and rising obesity rates among youth. The representative stated the following:

> Many of our students face these types of micro- and macro-traumas in their lives, and we have purposefully strengthened our program's focus on wellness and social support as effective protective factors against the long-term risks of unaddressed traumatic stress.

NGO 2 provides sport as well as language development services, particularly for non-English speakers. The representative cited that impediments toward language proficiency makes adjusting to a new country (and community) more difficult. By providing such a service in addition to sport (where language continues to be learned), the NGO seeks to facilitate a positive assimilation process for newcomers:

> I would say the language barrier is a big factor. So I think the UNHCR did a youth consultation recently with refugees and displaced people or displaced youth specifically around the world and found some consensus around what the biggest barriers are and I think language was sort of the first and foremost. Once you can navigate the language of the country and the community you're in it's a lot easier to overcome some of the other barriers.

In another example, NGO 8 offers sport as well as social-emotional learning to promote skills in responsible decision making, self and social awareness, self-management, and relationship building (resource from NGO 8). While the latter focuses on specific skillsets, the organization's free services in soccer is believed to counter the institutional "pay to play" model that has created a lack of access to sport for youth in underserved communities. The representative explained this situation in regard to the obstacles posed by financial requirements:

> Youth sports has become such a money maker in the US and the pay to play model has become so present so for youth that come from families/communities that aren't able to afford access to a club team or league that is pricey. Why is that a thing? Why can't kids play games and be active? Figuring a way to make this possible for youth regardless of income or communities access to the sport.

The above examples provide a glimpse into how SfC programs combine sport with non-sport services as a means to address the various ways in which conflict is

perceived: within individuals (i.e. feelings of hopelessness), as a form of physical harm (i.e obesity), as an opportunity for individual growth (i.e. language development, social-emotional learning), and as structural challenges (i.e. pay to play institutional model).

Improving Access to Create Safe Spaces

While sport is used as the component that attracts and retain participants in SfC programs, it is used primarily as a vehicle through which to create safe spaces. For example, the representative from NGO 2 shared that, "…sport is the vehicle within which we are building that inclusive community and that safe space and working on life skills." More specifically, the majority of interviewees shared that youth in underserved communities do not have access to positive mentors and role models. One effect is that youth develop feelings of mistrust which are believed to inhibit the development of meaningful relationships with peers and adults – relationships that promote positive perspectives and behaviors (representative from NGO 1). An interviewee from NGO 4 highlighted the inability of youth to "receive and give praise" as another attributing factor that inhibits the development of healthy and trusting relationships. He explained:

> For kids who have been traumatized it's very hard for them to receive praise actually because they're not used to it and have no experience with it. And so learning how to receive praise is an important skill for them. To receive and give praise.

SfC programs therefore focus on improving access to opportunities that convene youth with role models and mentors in safe spaces initially cultivated through sport. SfC Designers argue that safe spaces, which have been "diminishing" in underserved communities (representative from NGO 7) are critical because they encourage positive

changes in individuals' feelings, thinking, and behaviors; changes that contribute to individuals' fulfillment of basic needs and self-development.

So, how so these positive changes transpire? As an example, the interviewee from NGO 2 shared the following:

> I think the success that we've had there is in at least you know building a space where newcomers feel welcomed, feel included, feel safe, feel valued, and feel like they can sort of contribute, which is not necessarily otherwise available for them.

Shifting from a state of feeling unsafe, unwelcomed, and excluded to feeling safe, welcomed, and included are "empowering" for individuals (representative from NGO 2). Several SfC Designers expressed that creating safe spaces through sport settings enable participants to experience what it is like to belong to a team, to be accountable to teammates, and to represent something that is bigger than themselves such as their school and/or community (i.e. through competing in local leagues organized by the NGOs).

It is also believed that safe spaces created through sport fosters an openness within participants to discuss other topics – such as those related to life lessons, academics, character building, and mental health. An interviewee from NGO 1 highlighted an incident that to her, exemplifies the uniqueness of safe spaces created by sport:

> …working with girls whose average number of replacement was like 14 so they have been in foster care homes, hospital setting, over and over again, like no permanency and I talked to them about their trauma and process, things like poverty, community violence and things like being sexually traffic like huge thing and they respectfully said like I would prefer not to talk about it and then you bring them to play sport and they say "yeah sure I'll talk to you about it.

Designers believe that within safe spaces, individuals' need to feel safe should be met because it links to their perception-making process. When the need to feel safe is unmet, individuals' perceptions become stuck in "survival" mode (representative from NGO 5). However, when this need is met, individuals are able to shift perspectives and focus on self-development. The interviewee from NGO 5 provided a detailed example that stresses this point:

> Where we are, are some pretty violent areas. Just the trauma that comes with that of the lack of human faith, whether it be, "I'm not feeling comfortable walking outside a block or two." In [the area] there is a severe gang issue. So even logistics, getting kids places safely is a challenge but the trauma that has resulted, as well as, the kids, because they're not safe outside, it limits what they can do and where they can go. They're very much confined. Oh, I don't want to speak too generally, each place is different, situations for each family are different. But the general feeling of "hey I'm not safe, my neighborhood's not safe" and the feeling is "I've got to work at surviving" rather than work on developing. That puts a roadblock up for these kids.

An example of shifting perspective and self-development was provided by the interviewee from NGO 8 who shared that once participants feel safe they begin to imagine themselves in roles formerly thought to be impossible. Shift in perspective is therefore a process that involves re-imagining one's existing ideas of what is possible. This insight suggests the importance of improving access to opportunities where individuals can *act* upon their newly found perspective and thereby internalize new (positive) ideas that counter existing (negative) ones. For NGO 8, they focus on incorporating non-sport leadership opportunities that offer participants a chance to contribute to their communities:

> …we build in leadership opportunities for kids. And I think that's a very empowering opportunity for them to not only feel like there's a place for

> them but also realize that there's space for them to lead in this new community and to not only just participate in but contribute to their new communities' civic engagement and give back.

Safe spaces are also places where healthy relationships among different groups of people can be developed. The representative from NGO 2 emphasized their efforts to improve access to opportunities that cultivate cross-cultural alliances and friendships through sport. Toward this aim, the representative stated that they have "built a soccer league for middle school students that is not only for our students but also open to nearby schools and have sort of encouraged cultural exchange." The interviewee from NGO 3 also includes opportunities for cross-cultural interactions and shared that sport exchanges produce what may seem to be the unlikeliest of friendships. He stated the following:

> I mean right now if you ask one of our participants who their best friends are they'll probably name someone or a couple of people from various different countries than in their home countries. So that's piece I think we've been pretty successful at working to combat.

The effects of cross-cultural interactions experienced through safe spaces was reiterated by the interviewee from NGO 10 in relation to promoting increased understanding:

> For us it's about bringing together kids from different communities that rarely if ever take the time to understand one another and actually have a conversation, so that they realize they have more in common than they have different…we're teaching kids how to win with words instead of fists and guns.

To ensure that healthy relationships are developed, Designers expressed the importance of ensuring "quality" so that sport and non-sport components are creating effective safe spaces. As a representative from NGO 8 emphasized, "it is not possible to have quality programming without creating safe spaces." Quality was expressed primarily in the form of retaining focus on the use of sport as a "platform" (representative

from NGO 2) through which to achieve non-sport components, such as character development, language skills, social-emotional learning skills, academic and mentoring support. Such a focus is important given that Designers recognize the appeal to create "the next star athlete" or to turn their participants into the most technically skilled players who can win games does exist.

A focus on quality that ensures the achievement of non-sport components was identified in terms of providing opportunities for long-term engagement of participants. This can be two things. The first is ensuring long-term and sustainable programs; the interviewee from NGO 7 expressed that their program (and others) is designed to go "an inch wide, a mile deep" which means starting with younger aged participants so as to target primary development years. The interviewee expanded on what long-term engagement can look like:

> Some programs are long-term and emphasize this point. They do so because they believe that sustainable programs and starting as young as people will ensure the success of students…We provide opportunities for motivated students to become the best students, athletes, and people that they can possibly be. Many of our students come from tough circumstances and we aim to support them in any way we can as they go from middle school into high school and then beyond that into college and career.

Secondly, long-term engagement can mean providing opportunities over a period of years so that participants have repeated chances to develop relationships that alter their perspectives and behaviors (interviewee from NGO 5). The interviewee from NGO 5 explained these kinds of relationships and outcomes cannot be built overnight:

> I think that's the relationship piece. Short-term a kid can become friends with someone from the other side and enjoy playing bball [basketball] with them but how that translates to their stereotypes, attitudes, and the

> way they behave/act/feel about the conflict is a 10 year process. That's something I see in the results when you look at the kids who've been in the program for a really long time. You see strong changes in that sense.

Ensuring quality of programs is therefore connected to creating safe spaces that include opportunities across multiple stages of life, and that offer frequent chances for relationship-building.

In summary, SfC programs address conflict by improving access to services and opportunities through both sport, and non-sport such as mental health services, academic support, and mentoring opportunities. Through sport, the goal is to create safe spaces that fosters a sense of openness, fulfills the need (to feel safe, to connect, to belong), and encourages individuals to re-imagine their existing ideas of what is possible. This re-imagination is believed to shift perspectives of self and others and contribute to the development of healthy, trusting relationships. Shifts in perception are believed to be more internalized when individuals have non-sport opportunities that enable them to act upon their newly found perspectives. Such a pathway toward change suggests a connection between needs, perceptions, and behaviors.

Designers in this study have helped to identify that sport is used as a vehicle which initiates a *process* of facilitating shifts in perspective. Through the services and opportunities offered in non-sport components of SfC curricula, these shifts are believed to become more internalized and serve as the driving force that guides future actions toward positive change. Toward this aim, Designers strive to increase the quality of safe spaces by providing long-term and frequent opportunities for relationship-building that spans across multiple stages of life.

Sport as a process-inducing vehicle that facilitates shifts within individuals further aligns with several findings from this study. First, it supports the finding that SfC actors understand sport in terms of what it can do versus what it is. Second, it aligns with how SfC actors understand (and therefore seek to address) conflict: as an intra- and inter-relational phenomenon at the individual level that can manifest as a form of harm, an opportunity for individual growth, and as a structural phenomenon that prevents the fulfillment of basic human needs.

'Sport Plus – Plus Sport' Combination to Address Conflict

In the aim to address conflict and create positive change, NGOs' work has been categorized in two ways (Moses 2015). NGOs that are considered to be *sport plus* are mostly concerned with increasing participation in their chosen sport by reducing barriers to entry – a focus on addressing structural conflict. On the other hand, the primary goal of *plus sport* organizations is on utilizing sport as a vehicle to create positive change – oftentimes through changes that begin at the individual level. Findings from the sample of NGOs included in this study show that SfC NGOs incorporate both sport plus and plus sport goals into their mission. For example, NGO 8 transforms physical locations such as abandoned courts, empty schoolyards, and vacant lots into soccer fields where kids in underserved communities can play the game, while also collecting and redistributing soccer equipment so as to reduce the kids' obstacles to playing. Its third program would be considered plus sport where through a free afterschool soccer service, it uses soccer as a vehicle to teach youth about healthy habits and life skills.

NGO 9 and NGO 10 show a similar *sport plus-plus sport* combination in their programs. NGO 9 uses lacrosse during afterschool hours to instill sportsmanship values, education and life skills in youth in underserved communities in order to ensure that they have the necessary tools to be successful on and off the field. Additionally, they take a sport plus approach to grow lacrosse, a traditionally elitist sport, by reducing barriers of accessibility. NGO 10 uses soccer to promote integration among youth groups from different ethnic communities, while also a building space to play in the middle of a transit hub that serves to increase accessibility to the sport for people from other communities.

In summary, NGOs included in this study utilize sport as a means to increase participation in their chosen sport by reducing barriers to entry while also as a vehicle to create positive change – oftentimes through changes that begin at the individual level. Toward this aim, NGOs strive to ensure quality in their programs by connecting creating safe spaces that include opportunities throughout several stages of life, and that offer frequent chances for relationship-building.

Part III: Exploring Curricula of SfC Programs

In Part I of this Chapter, this study explored how SfC actors think about sport as well as how, through their personal stories, sport has become the lens through which conflict is viewed. It was found that SfC actors define sport primarily in terms of what it can do, as opposed to what it is. Along these lines, SfC actors believe in the replicability of sport's benefits; benefits which are related to their own personal development and identity, and which has shaped how they view conflict and its solutions. Part II explored how SfC actors think about conflict, how Designers assess context and its challenges with

respect to program participants, and what SfC programs do to address conflict. Findings revealed that SfC actors view conflict in three ways: as an intra- and inter-relational phenomenon at the individual level that can manifest as a form of harm; as an opportunity for growth; and as a structural phenomenon that translates as a lack of access to resources and opportunities and prevents the fulfillment of basic human needs. To understand conflict and its necessary solutions as conceptualized in these ways, Designers collect statistical data and assessments. This information informs SfC NGOs' efforts to improve access to services and opportunities through sport and non-sport components. Through sport, the goal is to create safe spaces that foster a sense of openness, fulfills basic human needs and that encourages individuals to re-imagine their existing ideas of what is possible. This re-imagination is believed to shift perspectives of self and others and contribute to the development of healthy, trusting relationships; elements which continue to be key themes in the following section.

Part III explores the range of concepts, theories, and frameworks from various disciplines which underpin the sport and non-sport components comprising SfC curricula. This content is used to shape and guide SfC approaches in creating spaces which encourage individuals to re-imagine ways of being and develop healthy relationships. Toward this aim, a dominant strategy is to connect non-sport concepts with sport and play-based activities, where the goal is to help participants learn certain skills (relationship-building and physical skills) and abilities to overcome conflict and create positive change. The targets of change and aspects of curricula that support such skill-building and abilities are also explored in Part III. Specifically, spaces between existing

reality and re-imagined reality, and spaces within frozen reality were found to be two key approaches that serve as loci of change – both of which place the individual at the epicenter. Furthermore, the physicality of sport and play activities in terms of engaging biological senses (feeling, touching, hearing, and seeing) which encourage shifts from one reality to another emerged as an element in individuals' learning process.

Concepts, Frameworks, and Theories Used to Address Conflict

Data collected from interviews and additional resources provided by Designers included in this study revealed the use of a wide range of concepts, frameworks, and theories from scholarship. This knowledge is used to underpin curricula of SfC programs. The following sections in Part III of this Chapter will hone in more closely on the ways in which concepts, frameworks, and theories inform curricula, particularly as it relates to how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change.

Content from Conflict and Peace Discipline

NGO 5 believes that by "facilitating constructive, guided interaction between children in divided communities, it can equip those children to lead their communities to a new status quo, favoring cooperation and mutual respect over mistrust and hostility" (resource from NGO 5). Such a pathway of change was identified by the NGO to derive from Gordon Allport's Contact Hypothesis Theory. Additionally, two other concepts were identified. First is conflict scholar John Lederach's concept of "hubs" which are spaces that allow individuals to engage with those whom they perceive to be enemies (Ibid.). Within these social spaces, the NGO representatives watch for where things meet, especially those resulting from coordinated and independent connections that build

strength (Ibid.). Here, sport is used as the vehicle through which social hubs are created and where change transpires in how participants relate to one another. In this sense, sport is utilized as the safe space where participants can be open to exploring different realities of self and others.

So, how exactly is such an openness created? The NGO offers "superordinate goals", a concept developed by social scientists Carolyn and Muzafer Sherif which are goals that are viewed as appealing to all parties involved in a conflict and that cannot be achieved by one group alone (Ibid.). The pursuit of superordinate goals can serve as a means to bind members of two competing groups into one unit and reduce intergroup hostility (Ibid.). In the sport setting, superordinate goals translate into scoring points or winning championships; achievements that cannot be obtained without teamwork and trust between all players on a team.

The use of Allport's Contact Hypothesis Theory, Lederach's "hubs" and Sherifs' superordinate goals grounds the NGO's use of sport as a vehicle that addresses conflict and creates positive change. Its use of sport as a safe space, as a tool that fosters openness, and as a process-inducing vehicle that facilitates positive shifts in perspective within and between individuals further confirms findings from study about what sport is believed to in SfC programs.

In another example, NGO 8 utilizes conflict resolving strategies grounded in negotiation scholarship such as those outlined by experts William Ury and Robert Fisher (resource from NGO 8). For example, the organization's conflict resolution component of the curricula seeks to teach skills that promote understanding of interests and positions of

participants while at the same time teaching communication strategies so as to appropriately resolve conflict situations. Sport is used as the vehicle through which to practice these skills. The interviewee from NGO 8 stated their sport sessions are comprised of training and dialogue sessions, where conflict resolution skills are discussed in relation to interactions that happen during drills and games. This includes discussions about taking turns to share perspectives, understanding that unintentional accidents happen and apologizing even though it was an accident, practicing awareness of what is happening, and listening to others.

More specifically, the curriculum teaches a four-step conflict resolution process where the first step involves understanding that "everyone needs to understand what the conflict/argument is about" (resource from NGO 8). Second, participants are advised to "avoid making things worse" meaning that "no harmful words or actions" should be taken (Ibid.). Third, participants in the conflict situation are encouraged to work together by taking "turns sharing and listening" (Ibid.). And finally, the fourth step is to find a solution by brainstorming about the possible ways to resolve the conflict. During a debrief of activities, whether on or off the sport field, participants are asked to reflect on what they practiced, posing questions such as: What did you try? How did it go? Was it successful? How did it make you feel? Would you try it again in a similar situation? Why or why not? (Ibid.).

By incorporating these strategies as part of training and discussions, NGO 8 believes that participants gain the opportunity to proactively practice conflict resolution

skills. These skills are believed to equip individuals with the ability to make proactive decisions and cultivate healthy relationships (representative from NGO 8).

In another example, NGO 2 seeks to cultivate positive relationships built on mutual respect (resource from NGO 2). Grounded in the recognition that behavior challenges can still emerge despite the existence of positive relationships, the interviewee from NGO 2 identified their use of restorative justice as outlined by conflict scholar Howard Zehr. Specifically, they take a "restorative approach to discipline, rejecting punishment and retribution in response to challenging behavior in favor of the development of positive relationships and peaceful resolution of conflict for leaders and students" (resource from NGO 2). Toward this aim, and similar to other NGOs, sport is used to create a space where participants are encouraged to "make better decisions by being reflective about the impact of their behaviors and imagining alternative actions and ways of being a positive member of the team community" (Ibid.).

The use of reflection as it relates to imagining alternative ways of being (and ultimately to behavior) aligns with findings from this study that through sport, spaces which encourage individuals to re-imagine new possibilities are created. Furthermore, it supports the intention behind encouraging re-imagination as described in this study – to develop healthy and trusting relationships.

Content from Other Disciplines

Data collected from interviews and additional resources provided to the researcher showed that SfC curricula use concepts, theories, and frameworks from a range of disciplines to ground the sport and non-sport components of their curricula. While the

content described above stem primarily from conflict and peace studies, the ones identified in the following section are from disciplines in clinical psychology, education psychology, childhood development, and organizational leadership.

The Football3 Methodology underpins the curriculum at NGO 10. The interviewee from this organization shared that the approach was first developed in Columbia as a way to address the societal effects of drug and gang-related violence in the country (interviewee from NGO 10). The Football3 Methodology requires a soccer game to be split into three halves: a pre-match discussion, the match, and a post-match discussion. During the pre-match discussion, the players decide the rules of the game. When conflict arises during the game, the players (not the referee) are in charge of deciding how to handle the situation. During the post-match discussion, the referee or "mediator" facilitates the players' assessment of their behaviors and the game's outcome. The interviewee expanded on this methodology:

> What we've done as well is actually let the kids call their own game. So we take a referee off the field and let the kids call it. They decide the rules. It's the football3 methodology that is used by the streetfootballworld members. And it actually was developed in Colombia at the height of the drug violence, cartel violence down there. They then bring the team back together. They discuss the rules and decide what they'll be. Then the mediator steps off the field and lets the kids play and call their own fouls and keep score and at the end they decide how well they followed the rules for fair play points. And it can be more pickup style or could be very formal. There's a lot of different variations on a theme.

Specific to the work of NGO 10, the Football3 Methodology is used to convene diverse groups of kids who would otherwise not have the opportunity to meet due to geographic or ethnically driven divides. The interviewee believes that this approach gives sport back to the youth while also empowering them to create and experience different ways to

resolve the conflicts which inevitably arise during interactions on the field. She stated the following:

> And it really has given the game back to the kids. We encourage a lot more pick up, a lot more self-directed play. You've got a ball and some guys, they decide what team and you play. Step back and let them take it, let them own it. Then they can decide how to resolve the conflict. It could be with paper rock scissors.

This kind of self-directed approach to resolving conflict is emphasized in the organization's non-sport components which also concentrate on character development and health and fitness. Toward this aim, the overall strategy is to "use soccer as a medium for educating kids to create a more positive life for themselves by matching important life skills with accompanying soccer skills" (resource from NGO 10). The Football3 Methodology and "matching" of life skills with sport-based skills are two important ways in which the curriculum at NGO seeks to equip participants to take ownership of what transpires in their immediate environment.

Derived from the clinical psychology discipline, the interviewee from NGO 1 identified two therapeutic frameworks that are used to develop its curriculum, Attachment, Regulation and Competency (ARC) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), both of which promote skills for managing emotions and developing awareness of self and others. Similar to NGO 10, the skills that comprise these frameworks are "translated into sport-based language" (representative from NGO 1). To describe such a translation, the interviewee provided the following example about how the skill of mindfulness is taught through sport training:

> Clinicians say mindfulness but what teenagers understand that…so we call it showing up - showing up for yourself, for others, listen to your coach

> and we break it down behaviorally so that they know exactly what that is. That's carrying the ball, focusing, looking at your coach. We also tell them as a skill to know when you haven't shown up because we don't want them to think you're on your game 100% of the time. Because no one is. So having the self-realization to know, "ok, I'm having a bad day but I need to understand that, to understand that maybe my mind or body is having a hard day and so what do I do when that happens. I go and check in with a coach and I ask them for help." Or "I come in…and just lose it, and that's lack of self-awareness and then the whole team has a hard day."

The opportunity to practice mindfulness in the context of "safe spaces" provided through sport enables participants to learn this skill outside of "conversations that take place in a therapist's office" (interviewee from NGO 1). The interviewee explained further that the "power of sport" lies in its relatability which youth are able to grasp and feel comfortable with. This is the opposite of sitting in an office with an adult authority figure who wants to talk about extremely sensitive experiences, feelings, and thoughts and does not invoke a sense of openness – at least not the same kind of openness invoked through sport. The representative explained this point:

> So the anxiety that they come in with or fear perhaps or whatever words they put to that, you're not starting from that place, you're starting from a "ok just come on in here we will start with sport and then we will graduate to talking about your feeling and we see how things go." And for kids who don't like sport and have bad experiences with recess and things like that, there is maybe a little bit there, but is not as much as bringing in some kids into an office setting where an adult holds the power of being the older adult figure, there is still a lot to overcome there.

Key to the process of merging sport with non-sport concepts is to explicitly link skills to how they apply in everyday life scenarios. The interviewee from NGO 1 expressed that this is an area for improvement in most SfC programs:

> I think that's one of the most important things…they teach skills but they don't do that other piece where they get links. And so the kids know about

> perseverance or communication (or they use their kid language) but they don't realize that it goes elsewhere - into their life.

Similarly, NGO 7 incorporates the concept of "growth mindset" in its curriculum to help its participants cultivate a sense of belief in their abilities to improve, through sport and then in non-sport components such as academic tutoring and community service. The interviewee from NGO 7 stated the following:

> We also have implemented a growth mindset curriculum in which we work to instill in students that they have the ability to improve themselves and their lives. We constantly remind them that just as they can improve physically and on the squash courts with hard work and focus, they can do the same thing academically and in their lives as a whole.

As participants experience improvement in their sport performances (i.e. technical abilities) the hope is that they will recognize the possibility that improvement in other areas of life are also possible through effort despite the obstacles they face. Toward this aim, the growth mindset is used to emphasize to participants that a commitment to life-long learning is key to overcoming adversity on the sport field as well as in life scenarios (representative from NGO 7). The interviewee shared that their "hope" extends beyond the self-development of their participants. Through participation in their program, the hope is that "students will grow up to be impactful members of society that help improve the lives of those around them" (Ibid.).

NGO 8 emphasized the incorporation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills in its curriculum, derived from the childhood development field. Similar to the approach of translating skill sets described above, NGO 8 converts "SEL competencies" into sport-specific skills that can be practiced on the field (resource from NGO 8). Essentially, the "curriculum links social-emotional topics to attributes of the game of

soccer, including: respect, sportsmanship, courage, goalsetting, self-confidence, hope, listening, communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, growth mindset, and responsibility" (resource from NGO 8). As an example, sport activities and discussions during training will focus on the SEL competencies of "responsible decision-making" which translates into respect/sportsmanship on the field; relationship skills translate into listening/communication; and social awareness translates into teamwork/conflict resolution (Ibid.). More specifically, the objectives in sport trainings which focus on teamwork/conflict resolution include describing the way people are similar and different; describing positive qualities in others; identifying problems and conflicts commonly experienced by peers; and identifying approaches to resolving conflicts constructively (Ibid.). Such objectives are "driven primarily through coach-to-player relationships and the peer-to-peer relationships" (Ibid.). This approach further supports findings from this study that sport is used as a process and relationship-focused vehicle in the aim to address conflict and create positive change.

Another framework identified through interviews conducted in this study is Positive Youth Development (PYD), a framework from the education psychology field. The interviewee from NGO 4 explained PYD in the context of opportunities and resources that foster positive experiences, relationships, and environments for youth:

> …essentially a positive youth development is an intentional pro social approach that engages youth within their community, schools, organizations, peer groups and family in a manner that is productive and constructive…enhancement of young people's strength promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.

The interviewee further shared that they "really rely on" the PYD framework to ground their curriculum given its focus on the strengths of youth versus their deficiencies:

> …it's an approach that really focuses on the strengths that you have instead of the many deficiencies or coming from a place of looking to build upon what you bring to the table and recognizing where maybe they might be struggling. And that's the driving force of everything that we do.

NGO 6 was another organization that specifically emphasized its focus on building upon the strengths of individuals versus the deficiencies. The interviewee from NGO 6 believes that despite "challenges" such as lack of access to resources and opportunities which its participants face, each individual has an innate ability to explore and resolve conflict. Their curriculum, therefore, focuses on helping individuals to recognize this ability.

Although not grounded in PYD and in the use of sport, NGO 6 utilizes play and the Adaptive Leadership Theory from the organization leadership discipline. The interviewee from this organization described play as the umbrella term for sport, where play is more akin to activities or games outside the traditional rules and regulations of sport. Adaptive Leadership Theory which grounds the methodology undertaken in the curriculum, argues that conflict should be embraced by the conflictants as a way to experiment and discover the necessary steps toward a resolution (interviewee from NGO 6). Reflecting this approach, play activities serve as the vehicle through which to create spaces that "freeze" conflict and enable participants to embrace, experiment, and discover solutions. In this play-based space where activities (i.e. games) are conducted, participants (adult teachers) are able to discover other perspectives (including their own), identify what is at stake (i.e. losses), reflect on competing views and values, and to learn

from and work/consult with one another as they take an active role toward creating solutions (Ibid.). The interviewee asserted that this process makes full use of play itself (versus play combined with non-play components) to address conflict and create positive change alongside the participants:

> Play is the vehicle through which we communicate, we build relationships, we understand complex challenges. We work together to overcome them. I think if you view it as something independent or apart, you're not able to tap into how truly powerful it is. There is something so innate in how we play together.

He also expressed the hope that such a process will help participants "realize the change that they were capable of" versus how the program has changed them. This hope aligns with the organization's focus on helping individuals tap into their innate abilities to address conflict, expressing further that the recognition of one's innate abilities is both effective and powerful for addressing conflict:

> The sense of power when you are able to reflect back to the community: you have the solution within you. You've stated it. It is here. We've organized it with you and now you can utilize it because it is tailored and fit to measure for you. That is truly powerful.

In summary, the use of concepts, theories, and frameworks from scholarship of a variety of disciplines is used to ground and shape SfC programs' ability to address conflict and create positive change. Such content is derived from conflict and peace studies that include Contact Hypothesis Theory, Lederach's "hubs", Sherifs' superordinate goals, and conflict resolution strategies based in negotiation as well as restorative justice approaches. Predominantly, SfC curricula is grounded in scholarship from clinical and education psychology, childhood development, and organizational leadership. Among the NGOs included in this study, the few that had readily available

ToC, better explanations of causation, or logic model in a couple of cases to share with the researcher were also able to identify the scholarship that underpinned their curricula. This finding suggests that an interplay between scholarship and what one believes can happen may help Designers to explain causation with clearer articulation. It also suggests how (and from where) SfC actors develop their understanding of what is conflict and how to address it.

A popular strategy used in SfC curricula is to translate non-sport concepts into sport-based activities, where the goal is to help participants learn skills that enable them to overcome conflict. This includes skills which place the individual at the locus of change and which cultivate the ability to:

- take ownership of what transpires in one's immediate environment,
- manage emotions and develop awareness of self and others,
- focus on life-long learning,
- develop healthy relationships, and
- embrace the challenges of conflict.

Interviewees identified that effectively cultivating these abilities is connected to how well (and explicitly) the applicability of lessons learned in sport settings to other contexts is communicated to the participants. Data from this study revealed one variation to this approach. Instead of having a sport and non-sport component comprise an SfC program, the play-based approach uses play alone as a means to freeze conflict and its challenges and help participant to tap into their innate capacity to resolve conflict.

So, what exactly are the skills that SfC programs focus on? And where is the point(s) at which change is believed to transpire through SfC programs? The following section brings into discussion the key types of outcomes that Designers seek (relationship-building skills), and targets of change and aspects of curricula that support such change (spaces created through sport).

Promoting Relationship-Building Skills

The curricula of SfC programs included in this study seek to address conflict and create positive change through emphasizing relationship building skills, which the data revealed to be a recurring theme. This emphasis suggests a heavy focus on change as it relates to individuals' ability to relate to others in a constructive manner. Furthermore, the emphasis suggests a connection between relationship-building skills with what is required to address conflict. Such a focus aligns with SfC actors' conceptualization of conflict as learned through findings of this study: conflict as an intra- and inter-relational phenomenon at the individual level and as an opportunity for growth. Essentially, Designers believe that positive relationship-building skills is a causal link between their program inputs and outcomes.

The interviewee from NGO 5 shared the following about the primacy of relationship building in their curricula:

> We have four pillars of what we believe, in terms of things to be in place, in order to get that relationship developed…And those are around constant contact. These programs can't be one offs or tournaments, they've got to be something that are regular, happening every day.

In this example, "constant contact" is defined as "continuous engagement with one another" (interviewee from NGO 5). The interviewee suggested that promoting "long-

term relationships" is key because "relationships don't happen overnight, they happen over years." Using basketball as the vehicle, they teach participants to learn how to trust and work alongside one another to achieve a goal (teamwork) through frequent and long-term opportunities (interviewee from NGO 5).

In another example, the representative from NGO 6 emphasized the "Relationships First" element of their curricula which is defined as:

> Relationships First: We engage in the process of building connections based on strengths, trust, compassion, and equity with individuals and communities as both the starting point and greatest outcome of the work. Without these relationships, the work will lack meaning and fail to accomplish any goal. (resource from NGO 6)

By focusing on building connections that foster positive relationships, the NGO believes that its participants will be equipped to contribute to their community's development, to address its needs, to participate in collective action, and to engage and collaborate with others (resource from NGO 6). Through play, this organization believes it is empowering participants to become change agents who, individually and collectively, foster positive change in their communities:

> Play is a medium of universal communication that creates spaces of security, connection, and possibility. When used to engage around a central goal, Play empowers participants as powerful agents of change, and catalyzes meaningful growth through both individual and collective action.

Collective action, for example, cannot be achieved without placing an intentional focus that helps to foster relationships among individuals. The interviewee from NGO 6 further suggested that an element of collective action is that individuals develop a positive relationship with themselves, where they can "recognize their own capacities" to address

the communities' needs. Such an assertion ties into findings from this study that conflict is also an internal phenomenon within individuals.

Set within the context of teamwork, the "ability to create and maintain healthy relationships with peers and coaches" is key to the work of NGO 1 (resource from NGO 1). Many of their participants have mental health conditions that has made it difficult to understand and expression emotion, participants also have a difficult time with sharing ideas and problem-solving a challenge (interviewee from NGO 1). Through the vehicle of sport, opportunities are provided to develop an awareness of others and of self, to practice processing and identifying their emotions, their coping skills, as well as learning how to regulate their responses to emotionally triggering situations (resource from NGO 1). Through this process and "as students learn to speak up and show up for their peers, they also begin to see themselves as leaders" (resource from NGO 1). Herein lies a recurring assumption in the data that positive changes within individuals is believed to encourage them to re-imagine their own realities beyond the level of self.

Communication (i.e. listening) and respect were also identified as skills that help to foster positive relationships. The representative from NGO 9 shared that:

> On both sides of the lacrosse field, communication is key to putting the ball in the back of net or making a defensive stop…we inform kids on every step of the communication process, from introduction to goodbye. Not only is the ability to communicate taught, but listening is also an integral part of successful communication. (resource from NGO 9)

The representative continued to add that knowing how to articulate thoughts and to listen effectively cannot happen without knowing how to show respect. Understanding and

internalizing the concept of respect is, therefore, "the most important component" to their curriculum; their participants are:

> …expected to respect their teammates, opponents, and coaches. The respect learned on the field will be translated into all aspects of human interaction, from the classroom to the home and everywhere in between: respect of the game, respect the game, respect the coaches, respect the opponent, the officials, all those types of things and then they hopefully take that off the field. (resource from NGO 9)

For NGO 1, learning how to be resilient was identified as a fundamental skill that can help its participants to overcome adversity. A resource from NGO 1 stated that:

> Adversity at any age can disrupt development. Learning to persevere is the crux of resilience…From goal setting and coping skill to positive decision making and work ethic, the Resilience bracket helps students establish tactics they can employ at times of need.

Learning skills that emphasize self-care, such as self-awareness and positive self-talk are believed to increase confidence, which the resource identified as factors that enable youth to re-imagine their own reality and take control of their lives (once again, the theme of re-imagining what is possible emerged in the data):

> Many youth experience diminished confidence. By practicing positive risk taking, self-awareness, positive self-talk, and self-care as part of the confidence bracket, students learn to see themselves as active and independent agents of their own lives — an essential part of developing identity.

An interviewee from another organization, NGO 10, emphasized confidence and identity in relation to negative influences. She emphasized that increased confidence and identity have the power to decrease the chance that youth will fall susceptible to negative influences from their environment(s) and instead take control of their lifestyles, as outlined below:

> Once children are involved in positive activities which not only teach soccer skills, but also character attributes such as respect, self-discipline, perseverance, social confidence, and positive identity, they are less likely to become involved with the negative influences in their neighborhoods. Their accomplishments, in turn, foster higher self-esteem and further promote constructive lifestyles. (resource from NGO 10)

In summary, findings from this study found that a certain set of skills are believed to promote healthy, positive relationships. They are communication (listening), awareness of others, identifying and processing emotions, regulating responses to emotionally triggering situations, resilience, self-care (self-awareness and positive self-talk). These skills are primarily believed to help individuals learn more about themselves and to relate constructively to others while navigating through situations. Furthermore, they are believed to encourage individuals to re-imagine their own realities beyond the level of self – at other levels of society, essentially as agents of change.

Promoting Physical Skills

While relationship-building skills were identified by Designers as those which prioritize learning of self and others, SfC curricula are designed to also promote individuals' physical skills. The link between physical activity in sport to health and fitness is obvious; increased physical activity will lead to improved physical health and fitness. Yet many participants of SfC programs are purported by interviewees to have never had access to such information, nor to opportunities to learn and exercise habits that promote their overall well-being. In this sense, SfC curricula aim to fill this gap.

NGO 7 prides itself on offering a "thriving squash program" that helps its participants to acquire "a balance of hard work, competitiveness, and fun" (resource from NGO 7). Having the dual benefit of being an individual and a team sport, sport is used as

the vehicle to develop both tactical skills such as decision-making (i.e. employing strategies, deciding when to hit the ball) and athletic skills such as footwork, coordination, speed, and endurance (interviewee from NGO 7). Similarly, NGO 10 focuses on improving physical skills such as "balance, agility, coordination, and spatial awareness" as well as tactical skills necessary to play the game of soccer. A resource from NGO 10 stated that:

> When teaching soccer specific skills, players follow an initial path focused on technical development, and as proficiency is developed, tactical elements are introduced. Proficiency is important to ensure that the player has acquired the skills to support their development at the next stage of the curriculum.

A few NGOs underscored how the development of physical skills and its related benefits align with nationally suggested recommendations for physical activity for youth – an attempt to draw linkages between how their work at a micro level connects with addressing positive change at a macro level. For example, NGO 8 provides children with the opportunity to learn the sport of soccer in a "supportive environment, while also getting the recommended 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity during each session" (resource from NGO 8).

Developing strong physical skills are important to sport, as is taking care of one's body so that it can perform optimally. Using an "integrated curriculum that is fun and engaging," the representative from NGO 8 also focuses on imparting skills around what to eat and how to eat right so as to provide its participants with necessary knowledge to lead healthy and active lives. Another NGO provides similar information to its participants while also recruiting the help of outside experts on nutrition. The

representative from NGO 9 underscored the importance of teaching youth about how to make choices that lead to living a healthy and balanced lifestyle:

> We preach the importance of taking care of one's body with proper nutrition, hydration, sleep, and taking time away from technology (we all know it's hard for kids to really be present). Nutrition specialists will commonly come to programs and teach nutrition in a way that excites our players to properly fuel their bodies.

Part of improved physical health is about taking care of one's mental health. NGO 9 seeks to instill a positive attitude and also techniques, such as meditation, that emphasize self-care from a mental health perspective. A resource from NGO 9 stated the following:

> Having a great mentality can lead to huge successes on and off the field. With the right attitude, kids are able to achieve anything they set their mind to. We teach kids in our program to always work hard, and never give up. During this segment, we introduce various concepts like meditation and goal setting.

In summary, sport is used as a vehicle through which participants gain access to information that can help them to take care of their mind and body. While technical proficiency in sport is also promoted through this process, it is believed to be relevant mostly for enabling active participation in the sport component of SfC programs. Beyond these goals, SfC programs promote skills that prioritize learning of self and others. These skills are believed to help individuals learn more about themselves and to relate constructively to others while navigating through different kinds of situations – such as in emotionally tense scenarios. Furthermore, relational skills are believed to encourage individuals to re-imagine their own realities beyond the level of self – as agents of change in other levels of society.

Loci of Change in SfC Curricula

Thus far in Part III of this Chapter, findings revealed that the vast majority of SfC curricula included in this study is predominantly grounded in scholarship from experts in a variety of disciplines such as psychology, childhood development, and organizational leadership. A limited few are grounded in conflict and peace studies, which suggests a specific body of knowledge focused on conflict and change that can broaden and deepen SfC programs' use of sport to address these two concepts. Findings also revealed SfC curricula translate non-sport concepts into sport-based activities where the goal is to help participants learn skills that enable them to overcome conflict. These skills are primarily focused on those which foster healthy relationships, and abilities that place the individual at the locus of change.

Spaces that Enable Shifts

Using sport, SfC curricula are designed to create safe spaces that foster a sense of openness, that fulfill basic human needs, and that encourage individuals to re-imagine their existing ideas of what is possible. Within these safe spaces, shifts in individuals' perspectives are believed to occur when they have a) developed a stronger sense of self and belonging, and b) have strengthened their ability to connect with peers as well as adults. Data collected from Designers revealed that there are two loci of change at which shifts are believed to transpire: spaces between existing reality and re-imagined reality, and spaces within frozen reality. The former represents a more prescriptive approach where desired outcomes in curricula is pre-set by Designers while the latter, spaces within frozen reality, is more elicitive in nature with desired outcomes defined by

participants themselves. Regardless, each locus of change is aimed at cultivating shifts in perspectives at the individual level; ones that enable them to act as change agents, inspiring others along the way. This outcome is, as a representative from NGO 9 stated, "the only thing that we can hope for."

The following section will discuss the ways in which SfC curricula included in this study is designed toward this aim, particularly as it relates to assumptions and believed pathway of change (ToC).

Spaces Between Existing Reality and Re-Imagined Reality

Through sport and play activities participants are intentionally placed in situations where they re-imagine the thoughts and behaviors that comprise their existing reality. This is done by infusing lessons from the non-sport components of the curricula into sport (and play) activities so that participants can experience them through the element of physicality or movement. Within this structure, all SfC curricula in this study allot time for dialogue between (and among) participants and Implementer(s) (i.e. coach, facilitator), primarily before and after sport activities. Dialogue sessions are designed to explicitly connect a curricula's non-sport lessons to its sport activities. The sessions are facilitated by Implementers and further serve to enable participants to reflect upon their experiences in activities – reflection that is also believed to encourage them to shift from their existing reality to a re-imagined reality.

As an example, the non-sport lessons at NGO 5 focuses on fostering an awareness of how one's attitudes can affect oneself and others. The curriculum conceptualizes such awareness through two polar "ways of being" which are "seeing people as people (seeing

them as equal value of ourselves) and seeing people as objects (seeing them as greater or lesser than ourselves, seeing them as obstacles, vehicles or irrelevancies)" (resource from NGO 5). The latter conceptualization, viewing others as objects is represented as being "in a box," a place that can feel "limiting, dark or frustrating" and that can become a habit (Ibid.). Dialogue sessions teach that the natural tendency is to invite others to come inside these boxes which initiates a process that "allows conflict to escalate and expand" (Ibid.) Essentially, this is the NGO's attempt to explain how an *us* versus *them* mentality is created.

As a sport activity, participants have the opportunity to experience how being a box can feel. One activity begins with participants forming a circle. Two are chosen to go in the middle of the circle and each is provided with a ball. The aim of the drill is to dribble the ball with one hand while simultaneously trying to knock the ball away from the other person. The two participants must remain inside the circle during the exercise; if one loses his/her dribble and the ball goes outside the circle, then they are eliminated and another participant steps inside to challenge the winner. To make the drill more difficult, those forming the circle can stand closer to one another so as to decrease the inside space allowed for the two dribblers. In this example, technical skills such as dribbling, coordination, and footwork are practiced. At the same time the drill is designed to liken the circle to "limiting, dark or frustrating" attitudes that can confine people. During reflection dialogues after sport activities such as this example, participants are asked questions such as "how did you feel inside the ring? (confined, cramped, pressure); how

did you feel towards your opponent? (want to win, want to steal the ball); does he/she represent a person to you (versus an object/obstacle)?" (Ibid.).

In another example, participants are instructed to pretend that it is the end of a game and they are to line up to shake the hands of their opponents – as is customary in basketball. Participants are then instructed to "think angry thoughts about the other side, and shake hands as enemies." In a second round, they are told to do the opposite, to "think positive thoughts about the other side, and shake hands as friends." (Ibid). Here, participants have the chance to experience how their thoughts directly impacts their behavior toward others.

Through sport, participants are placed in situations that enable them to re-imagine their existing reality. Most importantly to the curriculum at NGO 5, participants are taught that they possess control over their "way of being" and that they do indeed have agency within their existing realities. By remaining aware of their thoughts (or the boxes or circle) to which they belong and by "finding an out of the box place" (resource from NGO 5), they can re-imagine their existing reality to actively view people as people whose needs, desires, fears, and worth are of equal value to those of their own. Somewhere between participants' existing reality and a re-imagined reality through basketball is the space where shifts in perspective of self and others is believed to transpire.

On a more overarching level, NGO 5 believes that if sport is used to help a large number of individuals to cultivate positive perspectives of others despite dominant attitudes and behaviors of a given society, then a new generation of individuals at the

grassroots level will able to lead and support structural level policies that support peace (i.e. political decisions), thereby contributing to the resolution of conflict. An interviewee from NGO 5 stated this point:

> If a politician is going to move things forward at that level they need grassroots support. Grassroots supports is waning. Goal for orgs like ours is to build that back up again so it gets to a point where there's an opening for political solution…I think there are some kids who could…be leaders. That's why we have a big emphasis on leadership development.

The curriculum at NGO 1 is comprised of sport and non-sport components to increase youth's access to mental health services (representative from NGO 1). Toward this aim, the interviewee referenced the "magic" of sport in terms of its "live action" (i.e. physicality of sport) which is believed to enable participants to learn about coping and relational skills (i.e. regulating emotions) and also "practice" them in the moment.

> And so the active integration of their learning is not gonna happen in an individual therapy nor is it going to happen in art therapy or photography or anything like that. It's a special way of integrating the live action that sport programs have.

The interviewee provided a specific example of how participants might practice awareness and regulation of emotions in relation to self and others through live action scenarios that commonly arise in sport:

> They are playing basketball, someone throws them an elbow, are they gonna punch that kid in the face or are they gonna learn to de-escalate themselves, take a deep breath, turn around, and say 'you know what?' that happened in the court and if I punch that kid then I won't be able to play anymore, so to benefit myself and my team I am just gonna continue on.

In another example that involves sport drills, the curriculum focuses on the concept of teamwork using a passing game. In teams of two, participants are instructed to practice

passing the ball as many times as possible within a set amount of time. The same activity is repeated in teams of four. Discussions after this activity are designed to encourage participants to reflect upon their behaviors and interactions with peers. Implementers will ask participants questions such as "how many passing goals were scored? Was the game more successful with a bigger team" (resource from NGO 1)?

In these ways, sport is used to expose participants with mental health conditions to new thought processes, skills, and behaviors that vary from those which comprise their existing reality. Shifts in these areas are believed to happen through the live action of sport where participants have the opportunity to experience and practice first-hand the lessons discussed in dialogue sessions. Herein lies an underlying assumption that the physicality of sport is necessary to internalize concepts that are taught at the intellectual level. Such an assumption points to an overarching theory that it is necessary to engage both the mind and body in order to successfully shift perspectives.

Oftentimes, such sport-based discussions before or after activities can serve as the basis for conflict intervention. Instead of relying on the traditional structure of therapy where youth are immediately expected to share their most intimate thoughts, feelings, and experiences, NGO 1 utilizes sport as the primary structure through which personal discussions are had. For example, before participating in soccer or basketball drills in each session, participants will "circle up" (sit in a circle). During this time, Implementers facilitate discussions about participants "touchdowns" (successes) or "misses" (mistakes/failures) since their previous session together. So, within the sport setting and

sport language, non-traditional therapy spaces are also used to enable intimate discussions. The interviewee from NGO 1 explained this set-up:

> Then they'll come to a circle up, into the structure when we give them a few minutes to themselves. In the "circle up" they check in with us. In traditional group therapy it's usually "how are you doing from 1-5" or 'what's a rose (good) or a thorn (bad)?" So that's traditional group therapy language but we've translated that into sports, so it's "what's your swish and what's your miss" or "what's your fumble or what's your touchdown". So we're still using group therapy lingo but we're translating.

The interviewee from NGO 1 shared that within the spaces created through "circle up", participants will randomly share information such as, "I haven't eaten today" and "I know my family doesn't have electricity":

> So pretty frequently in the check-in circle up that you're part of, they'll say things to the kids like "what's your swishing or miss" and they'll say "oh I don't have a test this week or we are coming up on holiday and I need to miss school" or something like that. But then they'll throw out some pretty serious things about their fumbles or their misses. I don't know if [Implementer] gave you examples, but that they talk about community violence and it's usually in a very off handed way. Then our team is able to circle back around to it to really help them process about what they just said.

This kind of "very off handed way" of sharing sensitive information informs the interviewee's understanding of the "magic of sport" where sport has the ability to act as a vehicle which fosters a sense of openness. The interviewee explained this point:

> But the way that sport is used in that sense is a very open way to check in with someone who is very credible and has a lot of training to talk about these things. But what's really hard to get kids to do is just initially say it and give you the opportunity to talk about it.

Such a conceptualization of sport's ability further supports findings derived from this research study that sport is understood primarily in terms of what it can do versus what it

is. Along these lines, NGO 1 believes that if sport is used to emphasize the sense of openness and live action that it naturally induces, then individuals with mental health conditions will have access to therapeutic services which effectively impart coping and relational skills.

NGO 3 utilizes sport and non-sport components to increase youth's access to academic and physical fitness support while at the same time enabling positive character development. Specifically, math and science concepts are taught in classroom setting and also reinforced in sport activities in ways that relate to understanding the technicalities of sport. The interviewee from NGO 3 provided a detailed example of how non-sport lessons are connected to sport in experiential ways that enable them to internalize the curriculum concepts:

> There are lots of ways that happens…We have a curriculum…teaching things like trajectory, angular momentum, gravity, cardiovascular health through experiential activities that kids are able to feel, do, see, and touch and translate them into words on a page that might not have meant a whole lot to them otherwise. Every lesson has some sort of experiment related to baseball. For example, a trajectory lesson you'd take a water balloon and learn about launching goal, force and what's the right angle to get it to go as far as you want. When you pull back on water balloon launcher, what's the difference between line drive, pop up, ground ball and how does that translate into the common core subject matter a fifth grader is supposed to be learning. That's specific but of course statistics and data analysis are very relevant to baseball as well.

This example suggests that a deeper level of understanding will be gained somewhere between learning concepts in the classroom and learning them in experiential settings through sport activities designed to engage the senses (i.e. "feel, see, do and touch").

The interviewee from NGO 3 expressed that in his experience, youth from underserved communities in which the organization works have the tendency to believe

that they are "destined for failure." Therefore, a large component of their work lies in seeking to reverse this perspective through providing youth with opportunities to experience that effort is correlated with success. In this way, sport is being used as a confidence building measure to communicate this message and further emphasize that each individual has "control" over ensuring success in their life despite existing external situations. The interviewee expanded on this point:

> Those are probably the most immediately tangible - looking at how a young person is able to take their experience on the field that feels like it's fun whereas sitting in a classroom doesn't feel like it's fun, yet the field is the classroom at same time. You still need to share and give effort and focus on things you over which you have control. If you're taking a math test and you haven't studied, how do you expect to do well? Same is true if you're up at bat and you're hitting…you practice at hitting, at math you practice. Practical example, but until a young person experiences that and until they can translate it, it's hard to get that motivation to do well because they feel like "I'm destined for failure here." But once they experience some success through effort, and effort is always something they have control over, then they realize that effort leading to success can translate into a variety of areas.

Between moments where participants believe that they are destined to fail (existing reality) and experiencing that effort leads to success (re-imagined reality) is the space where shifts in perspective are believed to transpire. For example, participants shift from having a fixed mindset to a growth mindset, one that places themselves at the locus of creating positive change.

The interviewee's reference to participants' own control over effort is also key to the work of NGO 3 given that it forms that premise upon which the concept of agency is grounded. Herein lies the belief that if sport is used to foster the recognition that effort is directly within an individuals' control and connected to achieving success, then

individuals will also recognize their ability to succeed in other areas of life despite existing situation in which they live.

NGO 4 utilizes sport and non-sport components (poetry and writing lessons) to increase access for youth from underserved communities to learn skills that equip them to succeed in life. Among these skills is those in "conflict resolution" (interviewee from NGO 4) which are believed to "prevent" and be "proactive ways to avoid conflicts" (resource from NGO 4).

Within the sport sessions, they utilize play-based activities that place participants in situations that emphasize an awareness of self and others – this being the conflict resolution skill. As an example, participants are instructed to hold hands and form a circle. A volunteer stands on the outside of the circle and is referred to as the "outsider" while those inside the circle are "insiders" (resource from NGO 4). The outsider attempts to enter the circle using any means necessary barring inflicting harm on other participants while those forming the circle try to prevent an entrance. The activity usually ends when the outsider gives up or is able to break into the circle. In this case, the circle serves as a metaphor for access to resources (power, jobs, money) and those in power positions whereas the outsider's position represents those who are trying to gain access to the resources and who are not in power positions (Ibid). In the dialogue session that follows the activity, participants are asked open-ended questions that include: "How did it feel being on the outside/inside of the circle? What strategies did the outsider use to try and get into the circle? Did any of the insiders feel bad for the outsider? How, if at all, did they act on those feelings?" (Ibid.).

The activity is also linked to non-sport contexts by asking questions of participants to help connect their insights to life scenarios. Questions asked include "What are some of the more powerful groups in society? Which groups are on the outside? How are the outsider's strategies like the strategies used by people in less powerful positions to get opportunities? What choices do people in powerful positions in society have for including those with less power?" (Ibid.).

In another example, play-based activities within sport sessions at NGO 4 are designed to foster open communication, respect for others' feelings and opinions, improving listening skills, developing self-esteem, and being inclusive of others (Ibid.). Each participant is instructed to write one word on a 5x8 card that describes how he/she is feeling in the moment. Each holds up their card and looks around at the variety of responses. Here, the Implementer is tasked with pointing out how "rare it is for different people to bring the same feelings to an experience or situation" and invites the participants to share why they chose their words. The activity concludes with a discussion on the ways in which someone can help another person feel better. The interviewee from NGO 4 shared that it is within these spaces where understanding and empathy among peers is invoked, where bonds are formed, unique experiences are shared, and where youth begin to shift how they relate with their peers. The interviewee emphasized the importance of such moments:

> …I think when they're about to open up like that and talk about real things that are going on in their lives and communities, their peers get a better understanding of them and it builds that, not only more knowledge about one another, but that understanding, that empathy of what your fellow peers are going through day in and day out.

Somewhere between experiencing ways in which to relate to others through sport and play activities and discussion of experiences is the space where participants are believed to re-imagine a new reality about their role among others and in society. In this sense, if sport is used to cultivate an awareness of self and others, then individuals have the necessary skills to proactively prevent conflict.

NGO 9 utilizes sport and non-sport components to provide youth in underserved communities with education support while also instilling skills to ensure success on and off the sport field. Through sport-specific training, the organization watches for conflicts that arise, defined as intra and interpersonal altercations (interviewee from NGO 9). He explained this approach in relation to the conditioned behaviors of youth in their program:

> I mean our goal is to take the conflicts that arise from sports and use the tools to kind of resolve those conflicts peacefully off the field, and that's sort of the best we can do. A lot of the kids that we work with - and I've seen this, it's very interesting - I've seen it even as young as first grade, that if someone gets into a conflict they are sort of taught that you've got to go and stand up and be tough, and go and get in the kids face.

In reference to the first graders, the interviewee expanded:

> They were nose to nose, staring each other down and that's sort of what a lot of kids are taught that that's what you're supposed to do, and we try to teach them how to not only not get to that point, but there are other ways to do it instead of throwing a punch or kicking someone or using your lacrosse stick to hit somebody.

While the NGO does use incidences that arise during sport training to learn about the kinds of attitudes and behaviors that need to be addressed, they also have pre-set outcomes in their curriculum that they feel will address conflict incidences at large. Herein lies an assumption that a certain set of skills is adequate to address intra and

interpersonal conflict in different contexts. For example, the organization encourages youth to show respect at all times and connects the concept as a necessary element of sportsmanship on the field. Sportsmanship is defined as "an aspiration that a sport will be enjoyed for its own sake, while considering fairness, ethics, respect, and a sense of fellowship with the other competitors" (resource from NGO 9). Teaching good sportsmanship, the way that NGO 9 approaches it means transference of positive attitudes from sport into life contexts:

> finding that the positive attitude learned on the field carries over into other areas of life. At school, for example, you're able to appreciate the contributions made by classmates and know how to work as part of a team to complete a project. You may enjoy more success at work as well, because a big part of learning good sportsmanship is learning to be respectful of others, including customers and coworkers (Ibid.).

Additionally, the curriculum includes an emphasis on meditation and communication, both of which are first taught in the context of improving technical proficiency in sport and then related to life as a code of conduct during discussion – similar to the concept of "ways of being" used in NGO 5. The interviewee from NGO 9 expressed that many of the participants in their program live in "dangerous neighborhoods with loud noises, violence and traffic 24/7. They also often live in overcrowded homes with little space and attend rowdy schools" (Ibid.). Through "meditation and mindfulness" practices guided by Implementers, the organization seeks to address this fact at the start, middle or end of each sport session. Moments of silence where participants remain "physically still" (Ibid.) are believed to be the only one to two minutes of "calm and silence" that they have access to during the day (interviewee from NGO 9). The interviewee from NGO 9 explained that an unexpected benefit resulting

from the incorporation of meditation and mindfulness was when one of their participants "actually fell back on her meditation training and her mindfulness training to avoid that conflict, to avoid getting into a fight with this other student" (Ibid.). The interviewee expanded on this point in terms of "conflict resolution":

> Our initial goal was to allow them to have a little bit of peace and quiet in their lives during the day, and so that's why we introduced it, not knowing that a byproduct of this would be conflict resolution, which is really neat and unexpected to be honest.

The communication element of the curriculum is defined by six elements that is at first made applicable to the sport context. To effectively communicate, participants are taught to be *clear* by ensuring that their words are being presented clearly; to be *concise* by not straying from the intended message; to be *correct* by not giving misleading information; to be complete by providing all information versus a portion of it; to be *courteous* by being polite, non-threatening, and avoiding conflict; and finally, to be *constructive* by being positive and avoiding a critical and negative stance (resource from NGO 9).

Both communication and meditation are believed to be key elements in developing conflict resolution skills. More specifically, the space where participants apply non-sport lessons into other contexts is where they are believed to shift their existing reality into a re-imagined reality.

While the interviewee did share that addressing external factors such as "home, or something going on at school" is oftentimes out of their reach, he also expressed the value of teaching youth skills that equip and enable them to resolve internal and interpersonal conflict. This is because the NGO's believed pathway of change is that if

sport is used to teach conflict resolution skills to individuals, then they are equipped with the tools and also choice to react in constructive ways that prevent conflict. This pathway of change aligns with findings derived from the study that conflict is indeed an internal phenomenon and an opportunity for growth.

In summary, sport and play activities are used as a vehicle to position participants in situations that enable them to re-imagine their existing reality. Re-imagination involves shifts in perspective, including feelings and behaviors toward self and others through leveraging the abilities of sport and play to achieve three key outcomes:

- a sense of openness to share sensitive thoughts, feelings, experiences;
- a sense of agency that places the individual at the locus of driving internal and external change;
- engagement of biological senses that help to internalizing concepts and skills.

These outcomes are connected to addressing conflict as it is perceived to be an individual phenomenon, an opportunity for growth, and as structural (lack of access) – three ways identified in findings of this study.

Spaces Within Frozen Reality

The majority of SfC curricula included in this study utilize sport (activities, games) and non-sport components (i.e. academic support, therapy services, health and physical fitness support, character development) connected through dialogue sessions that more explicitly teach and reinforce pre-set desired outcomes to its participants. Another approach that emerged from the data is one that relies heavily on embracing conflict

through play activities and dialogue sessions, but without the non-sport components to teach and reinforce lessons. Functionally, this means that play is morphed into a metaphor which specifically represents the conflict (i.e. a form of harm or lack of access) that participants face. The resulting space is one which 'freezes' conflict and allows participants to explore the challenges that comprise it and discover solutions.

NGO 6 utilizes this approach through a play-based curriculum, where play is akin to activities or games outside the traditional rules and regulations of sport. Through play, the organization seeks to increase access to professional development opportunities for educators in order to improve the quality of education for youth in underserved communities. Toward this aim, the interviewee shared that he has moved farther away from having a set curriculum as it allows for elicitive approach led by their participants (school administrators) and facilitated by the NGO Designers who also serve as Implementers:

> So really we've moved further and further away from a curriculum and view our work through the eyes of social work where we're engaging at a community level to do stakeholder mapping, to really understand the players who are impacted by our program…

While their end beneficiary is youth, the NGO engages those who are responsible for disseminating information to youth – teachers and other school administrators. Challenges that prevent teachers from effectively carrying out their responsibilities are identified through having conversations with participants and learning about their "stories", what their work looks like, what is their history, and what are the challenges from their perspective:

> …it's very specific to that communities' ecosystem and we seek to really have them tell us what the assets that they have are and where they face the greatest challenges and how best we can support them using play as the vehicle to explore what that challenge is. (interviewee from NGO 6)

From this point, play-based activities are designed by the Designer-Implementers in order to create an experiential space that serves as a metaphor for the identified conflict. The interviewee from NGO 6 expressed that this space enables participants to drive the process of learning, sharing thoughts and knowledge in relation to the existing challenges of their community while Implementers serve as facilitators:

> …really we're truly there as facilitators, that we're there to ask questions, but that the learning and the expertise that gets generated is all from within the community. And we highlight that. We try to have folks recognize the learning that's happening. The thoughts that are being generated are coming from the communities; we're just creating a space where they are sharing with one another.

While the program stays away from having a pre-set established curriculum to begin with, it does so for the purpose of gaining understanding and clarity about the needs of each cohort of participants. It utilizes local knowledge about a particular challenge/conflict and views intervention as a process aimed at discovery and that emerges from the resources within the local environment, as opposed to teaching a particular set of skills that are believed to resolve the conflict. Once local insiders' knowledge has been obtained, a curriculum is then designed to lay out play activities which can best serve as a metaphor for the identified challenges. As an example, one group of educators wanted to know how they could improve low levels of language and literacy in the classroom. In the play activity outlined below, participants had the opportunity to feel, think, and act through challenges that comprise the conflict:

> …assumed the role of the children to model it out and experience it together and this was the game: We have a number of cups there were on the table and within each cup there was either the beginning letters of a word or the end letters of a word. Like there's ch- or an –ed. So there was different letters within each of the cups and we took turns as a team throwing the ball and if the ball landed in a cup we would know what words were searching for. So if a ball landed in a –ch cup, there were then words taped on the wall throughout the room that started with these letters or ended. And the goal was to try to find as many as you could to bring them back to your team.

In another example of a play activity, the challenge is cultural barriers that prevent relationship building:

> …clip out different images and words that they felt represented the values and ideals of the parents' culture. And they then pasted them inside the image of the person. And we then asked them to do the same thing for themselves. To think about values and ideals that underlie what they want for their students, to try and find images and words in the newspaper and then to paste those around the person. Then we asked them to think about, look for similarities and differences between those values and think about what that could mean about how they're engaging with families. So it's a really interesting conversation because I think there's a lot of recognition about the alignment that existed between what parents truly want to their kids and what we want for them. And then we're able to start with that value alignment, those shared beliefs or goals or hopes that we have for our children, then it's going to be a little easier for us to build a relationship with one another.

The approach to "suspend reality to a certain extent" is believed to allow participants to engage in "creative and deeply critical thinking that's necessary around a particular challenge" (interviewee from NGO 6). The belief is that if play is used to represent conflict and its challenges as understood by participants, then participants have the opportunity to tap into their innate ability to explore and discover solutions. Such a pathway of change is deeply rooted in individuals' innate ability to address conflict.

In summary, shifts are believed to transpire at two loci of change in SfC curricula included in this study: spaces between existing reality and re-imagined reality, and spaces within frozen reality. The former utilizes sport and non-sport components to teach and reinforce pre-set desired outcomes to its participants. Dialogue sessions are incorporated so as to discuss the applicability of learned skills in sport to life contexts. Discussions also serve to encourage participants to reflect on and re-imagine the thoughts and feelings which comprise their existing reality. Toward this aim, the physicality of sport and play activities was mentioned in terms of biological senses (feeling, touching, hearing, and seeing), suggesting that this element also encourages shifts from one reality to another.

The latter approach, spaces within frozen reality, relies heavily on embracing conflict through play activities and dialogue sessions, but without the non-sport components to teach and reinforce outcomes. Play is morphed into metaphors that specifically represent conflict as identified by participants themselves. The resulting space is one which 'freezes' conflict and allows participants to explore and discover solution to the challenges that comprise conflict. For this reason, and unlike the majority of SfC curricula included in this study, there is no established curriculum to begin with (other than the incorporation of play as the vehicle) given that identification of conflict may vary with each cohort of participants in the program.

The spaces created through SfC curricula seek to develop a greater awareness of self and others among program participants. However, the approach to freeze conflict and work entirely within that space (versus including add-on components that connect

different contexts) may foster a deeper incorporation of the actual conflict that participants face.

Regardless of the approach, SfC use sport and play as the vehicle to address conflict as an internal phenomenon (emotions and thoughts), as an opportunity for growth (awareness of self and others), as a form of harm (toward self and others), and as a lack of access to services and opportunities (academic support, mental health services, professional development). The pathway toward change in SfC curricula included in this study is premised on the assumption that individuals, having the necessary skills and innate agency, are at the locus of change.

Part IV: Contributions of Implementers to SfC Curricula

In Part I of this Chapter, this study explored how SfC actors think about sport as well as how, through their personal stories, sport has become the lens through which conflict is viewed. It was found that SfC actors define sport primarily in terms of what it can do, as opposed to what it is. Along these lines, SfC actors believe in the replicability of sport's benefits; benefits which are related to their own personal development and identity, and which has shaped how they view conflict and its solutions. Part II explored how SfC actors think about conflict, how Designers assess context and its challenges with respect to program participants, and what SfC programs do to address conflict. Findings revealed that SfC actors view conflict as an intra- and inter-relational phenomenon at the individual level that can manifest as a form of harm; as an opportunity for growth; and as a structural phenomenon that translates as a lack of access to resources and opportunities and prevents the fulfillment of basic human needs. To understand conflict and its

necessary solutions as conceptualized in these ways, Designers collect statistical data and assessments. This information informs SfC NGOs' efforts to improve access to services and opportunities through sport and non-sport components. Through sport, the goal is to create safe spaces that foster a sense of openness, fulfills basic human needs and that encourages individuals to re-imagine their existing ideas of what is possible. This re-imagination is believed to shift perceptions of self and others and contribute to the development of healthy, trusting relationships; elements which continue to be key themes in the following section.

Part III explores the range of concepts, theories, and frameworks from various disciplines which underpin the sport and non-sport components comprising SfC curricula. This content is used to shape and guide SfC approaches in creating spaces which encourage individuals to re-imagine ways of being and develop healthy relationships. Toward this aim, a dominant strategy is to connect non-sport concepts with sport, where the goal is to help participants learn certain skills (relationship-building and physical skills) and certain abilities (see above for description) to overcome conflict and create positive change. The targets of change and aspects of curricula that support such skill-building and abilities were also explored in Part III.

Specifically, two approaches to designing curricula were found. The first includes sport and non-sport components to teach and reinforce pre-set desired outcomes to its participants. Information derived from SfC actors' perceptions of sport and conflict, statistics and assessments, and scholarship (as learned from findings in this study) underpin the pre-set outcomes. This is the dominant approach used by SfC NGOs

included in this study. The second approach relies heavily on play activities that simulate challenges of conflict and does not include non-sport components to teach and reinforce outcomes. In addition to SfC actors' perception of conflict and sport, information about conflict as defined by each cohort of participants in the program is used to determine outcomes.

In the 'sport and non-sport' curricula, the locus of change is believed to be in spaces between existing reality and re-imagined reality, whereas in the 'play curricula' the locus of change is believed to be in spaces that freeze reality. Both approaches place individuals at the epicenter of change. Additionally, both approaches utilize dialogue sessions to encourage reflection on lessons learned in terms of exploring its applicability to life contexts, and in terms of promoting a re-imagination of thoughts and feelings that comprise participants' existing reality. Toward this aim, the physicality of sport and play activities mentioned in terms of biological senses (feeling, touching, hearing, and seeing) emerged as an element that is believed to encourage shifts from one reality to another.

Part IV begins with a focus on exploring the communication methods between SfC actors, which was found to be primarily through trainings and feedback systems that enable information-sharing throughout the execution of SfC programs. The focus on communication revealed that Designers perceive Implementers' knowledge to be of great value, by virtue of the latter's direct engagement with participants in the communities in which programs are offered. Given Implementers' insights, they are given agency to co-design curricula and apply them as they feel to be necessary for effectively meeting the needs of program participants. It was also found that Designers' perceive Implementers'

insights as lending them the ability to recognize teachable moments where sport and non-sport lessons can be best communicated to participants. Further, such teachable moments are believed to occur once Implementers have, using their insights, cultivated a supportive environment that allows for meaningful connections with participants to be developed. Implementers, therefore, are perceived to be a critical piece to ensuring the effectiveness of SfC programs.

Methods of Communication between SfC Actors

Before exploring the ways in which Implementers contribute to SfC curricula, as perceived by Designers, it is important to look into the methods of communication as well as the kinds of information discussed between SfC actors included in this study. Such an exploration will continue to identify the pieces that frame a better understanding of how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change.

Communication through Trainings for Implementers

One method of communication comes through annual trainings and workshops. These events are designed to create opportunities for communication between Designers, other program staff, and Implementers who come from a range of backgrounds with and without sport experience: current and retired school teachers, volunteer community members, students, and former and current high school/collegiate athletes. Trainings are also designed to provide Implementers with resources that strengthen their knowledge of their organization's goals, structure, and knowledge relevant to effectively connect with program participants in meaningful ways. An interviewee from NGO 4 emphasized the responsibility of program staff to ensure that Implementers are set up for success:

> We see our job as program staff to provide our coaches with absolutely everything that they need to run the best program to give the kids the best experience possible. So that not only includes all the supplies and resources that they need and curricula but also the training to best utilize all of those resources too.

Specific topics of discussion at these trainings between Designers and Implementers include ways to ensure that participants feel safe and supported; how Implementers themselves can feel safe and supported, and ways in which Implementers can integrate as a team and as leaders in the organization. Trainings and workshops also provide space where Designers familiarize Implementers with curricula and its scholarship-based underpinning (i.e. "positive youth development principles"). For example, the interviewee from NGO 4 provided a detailed account of the frequency, structure, and content offered through their training:

> Yeah, so we have four trainings a year. It's a total of almost 20 hours of training. We do 2 trainings per season, we do a kickoff training and then a midseason training. The way that we structure our trainings, it's almost split in half. The first part of the training is the entire coaching core, all of our coaches together, and we'll go through some of the boring logistics and camp book, some of the things that are pretty standard. But that's also where we introduce our positive youth development principles and sessions.

The representative from NGO 8 shared that their trainings include specific guidelines for Implementers about how to spend quality time with participants. Examples of guidelines include taking the time to "visit the site and assess the amount of available space, the surface, the weather, and safety conditions", reading through the curriculum so as to become familiar with the sport and non-sport components, and taking time to learn the name of each participant (resource from NGO 8). Implementers have the opportunity to discuss guidelines and concepts within the lesson plans provided to them, such as those

on ensuring safety, fun, full participation of all program participants, and how to provide clear verbal instructions supplemented with demonstrations (Ibid.). For example, when providing instructions Implementers are encouraged to follow an "I, You, We method" which involves the Implementer to first demonstrate the action ("I"), then ask a player to demonstrate the action ("You"), and finally ask the entire group to engage in the action ("We") (resource from NGO 8).

Implementers and Designers also discuss ways in which the former can improve the quality of their teaching through the practice of self-reflection and self-assessments of their own behaviors. As examples, NGO 2 provides Implementers with specific behaviors grounded in "sport and health, trauma-informed, youth development, and access and inclusion" to guide their behavior and reflective process (resource from NGO 2). NGO 5 provides similar guidance that is grounded in a commitment to seeing all persons as having equal value (resource from NGO 5).

In summary, trainings and workshops offered by SfC NGOs included in this study serve to inform Implementers about relevant knowledge with which they can effectively teach, connect with kids, and reflect upon their behaviors in the process. More so, these events were identified as a means through which Implementers and Designers can communicate. The second means that enables communication between SfC actors is throughout the execution of the program, as described in the following section.

Communication throughout Execution of Program

Designers and Implementers included in this study communicate chiefly through creating systematic feedback loops that "encourage open dialogue" (interviewee from

NGO 4). As one interviewee from NGO 9 expressed: "Yes, there is communication between the coaches and those who design the curriculum. Our program director designs the curriculum and she and the coaches are in constant communication throughout the year."

Communication primarily happens through face to face meetings and conference calls that include Implementers' reflections, and also others means such as survey data that captures feedback about "their favorite lesson, what things to improve" (interviewee from NGO 4). More specifically, the interviewee from NGO 1 shared that they have a weekly "model of supervision". Coaches are in direct contact with Implementers, and several times a week their daily session notes are reviewed by the vice president. Notes typically do not include names of participants in order to maintain confidentiality but they do share specific cases, incidences and how they were handled, and notes on the kinds of skills that may be needed for specific age groups in the program. Among other tasks, the vice president is responsible for communicating such information to the Chief Operating Officer (the primary Designer) and helping her to write/revise the curriculum. The Chief Operation Officer, however, has open access to Implementers' notes at any given time. She expanded:

> Group notes go into our electronic house record and I have access to everybody's notes. I can just log in and pull up and see and read her notes for the past two years if I want to. It doesn't sound like the most efficient system but in terms of emergency or parent calling the supervisors or the administrators we do always have access to those.

The Implementer at this NGO emphasized the value of their "open door policy" because it enables her to "step in" and talk to Designers any time, promoting

communication and an awareness of what is happening in areas beyond curriculum design. She explained: “at top they know exactly what we are doing because there is always communication.”

The interviewee from NGO 7 stressed that they have daily interactions between Designers and Implementers so as to promote cohesion. He stated, “[o]ur squash and academic staff also continuously work together to make sure that students are living up to our expectations both academically and athletically” (Implementer from NGO 7). The meetings have several purposes, such as to share any feedback received from participants in the program and also to discuss the ways in which participant-driven feedback might influence curricula in terms of necessary changes or improvements.

Another interviewee from NGO 7 emphasized that in addition to the daily interactions, there are weekly meetings where “98%” of the information discussed is about “programmatic stuff” such as the logistics of program components. Other than being in an “all-staff” meeting, she stressed that her attendance is required because they are still understaffed and in order to “not lose touch” she has to “figure out how much to be involved and how much to not be involved.” This point suggests there is a “fine line” between designing curricula and implementing a program as opposed to being two separate areas of responsibility. This is especially true for smaller sized organization, such as those with 5-10 staff members (characteristic of most SfC NGOs included in this study). Regardless, the role of a Designer and Implementer are believed to be inter-dependent and, together, they connect the components of a program.

One way in which communication between Designers and Implementers can be maximized is through having the same person design and apply curriculum. NGO 6 uses this approach which functionally means that the curricula for each cohort of participants is designed collectively by a staff of Designers and Implementers. Those who apply the curricula are selected based on their "availability and proximity of the community members" (interviewee from NGO 6).

Having tried the dual-role approach, the interviewee from NGO 1 shared that it can be both beneficial and limiting. A dual-role enables the individual to be entrenched in the day to day activities where his/he can "really learn and understand from the kids" but it can also limit the individual's ability to participate in strategic organizational-level conversations necessary for identifying and obtaining funding (interviewee from NGO 1) – an important part of a Designer's responsibility. In reference to the dual-role, the interviewee explained this insight:

> ...immensely helpful but the drawback was that he didn't necessarily have to view what our growth plans were for the organization, which involve things like juvenile justice, about integrating others things into the curriculum long term. So, if your time is wrapped up only in curriculum and in coaching, you're not gonna be part of strategic conversations about where the organization is moving.

One way around this obstacle, she stated, is to make sure that each Designer and Implementer have their own niche work but that a high level of communication exists between them. For NGOs that apply their curriculum in different cities across the United States, ensuring a high level of communication becomes even more important. The representative from NGO 4 explained the kinds of information communicated so as to ensure that community-specific knowledge is incorporated into their curriculum:

> There is a feedback loop that affiliates around the country get back and forth info from their coaching as to what is happening: what things are going well, what things need to be changed, what things need to be overhauled, what things need to be a small tweak to make things relevant in their neighborhoods and in their cities.

The protocol for Implementers at NGO 4 is to communicate with their local program staff, who serve as their point of contact for submitting feedback, concerns, comments. Program staff are then responsible for participating in monthly phone calls with other program staff from other locations. This ensures a connected and systematic set-up through which knowledge of Implementers is communicated to Designers. The interviewee explained this feedback system, referencing Implementers as "frontline coaches":

> And so the frontline coaches, or, traditionally, teachers that all of our sites, would notify the program staff in their cities and then as the network we all have pretty good monthly program calls where we're able to share that feedback with each other, document those issues or areas for improvement and then make sure that those get filed away for whatever the next version of that curriculum revision will be.

In summary, communication between Designers and Implementers included in this study is encouraged through feedback systems that enable information-sharing about curricula and how it relates to target audiences. Additionally, communication is encouraged so as to ensure that Implementers' knowledge is collected. From the perspective of Designers, what Implementers know – and its perceived value – was found to be a critical piece to ensuring the effectiveness of SfC curricula. The following sections on the importance of context-sensitive curricula, Implementers' agency, and leveraging teachable moments describe this perceived value.

Importance of Context-Sensitive Curricula

The majority of SfC Designers emphasized the importance of context-sensitive curricula, which includes an attention to individuals' needs. To ensure that their curricula is such, Designers create them to be a "set of guidelines" that is "intentionally flexible to local contexts and needs" (interviewee from NGO 2). An interviewee from NGO 8 expressed this approach in terms of "flexibility" and "community buy in" that is believed to be necessary to create positive change:

> I think one of the most important things that we've done well or correctly is allowing that flexibility, for it to have flexibility in attempt of positively changing the community. Starting with a group that has roots in the community that knows how to work at the grassroots level and to get community buy in which are all hugely necessary if you want to create positive change.

The interviewee from NGO 4 shared that components of his organization's curricula are designed to be emphasized or de-emphasized according to different locations in which they are implemented:

> That's been really cool to see here in [city] how every different partner has taken the program and worked it into their own context, own neighborhoods or cities where they work. Because it's got different components and places where you can emphasize or deemphasize, it can look or feel different wherever you go.

Similarly, the representative from NGO 10 underscored that they remain in "beta mode" so as to be "nimble and responsive to changes in the environment" in which they work. This includes having to change the focus of their non-sport component, such as adjusting from health, fitness and nutrition to employability and inclusion. Such changes are believed to be a response to the shifting needs of community members. The interviewee shared the following:

> …over the course of our 25 plus years we've been always trying to innovate, not staying stuck on the same old way of doing it. If we find that the needs of the kids change, we try to change. If something is not working or only working marginally we tweak it. We're not afraid to make adjustments and change as conditions change. I think that's enabled us to stay ahead of the game. When everyone else was doing health and fitness and nutrition, we'd moved onto employability. Now, employability has just kind of been our mantra. We're actually looking more about inclusion. So, it's deciding what the focus should be and being willing to make the adjustments in programming and resources to address it.

Context was also explained in terms of simply knowing "what's going on" and what "works" with different groups. This was also referred to as cultural awareness, identified as the "critical piece" that enables Designers to create curricula which can be adapted to resonate with youth from different environments:

> We can provide some guidance on those topics but it takes coaches that also are a little bit aware culturally about what's going on in those neighborhoods. I think that that's a critical piece too, that we can give feedback on, that "this activity didn't really work for my kids because of this, or this one really hit home because of that." Some of those little things allow us to better create a lesson that could be adapted in a variety of environments that still engage youth in positive ways. (interviewee from NGO 4)

Incorporating cultural awareness into curricula can sometimes require a negotiation between Designers and Implementers. The representative from NGO 8 shared that this process is about "just kinda the push/pull of what to include, how to include it, and how to deliver that content and has been very interesting to be a part of and really something special." For example, Implementers ("coach mentors") develop their "cultures" or "ways of doing things" when applying the curriculum in the communities in which they work; ways that can require a negotiation about the core components that make the organization's base curriculum. The interviewee expanded on such a situation:

> There are 4 core components: physical activity, health/wellness education, mentorship, and family/community engagement. A lot of it would fall under mentorship and building out our training for coach mentors. Back when we started, a lot of groups told us they had their own mentorships philosophies and trainings and I guess cultures/ways of doing things/policies/procedures, etc. so we focused more on the first 2 components of the physical activity and nutrition/education.

While Implementers develop their own cultures and ways around how to apply curricula, the interviewee from NGO 8 found that they are not able to articulate or provide any written material that explains how they go about knowing and teaching:

> When we started to ask for their materials or started to dig about you know we really want to focus more on mentorship and how to deliver proactive behavior management, groups weren't able to really…they didn't have an ingrained way of doing things that was amazing. They run some fantastic programming for youth but we decided that we should build something out. Again, with our community partners we built something out.

Having cultural awareness is not, however, restricted to Implementers only. A representative from NGO 5 stated that it is "important that people that design the curriculum have experiences on the ground that are similar to that" in order to avoid situations where Designers come in and say, "this is what you do." He emphasized that while some parts of the curriculum can be "cookie cutter," other parts require that "enough pre-work has been done with the people that are going to be involved in the training, particularly leadership, to understand context, to have them involved as leaders of it and all that stuff is truly important." This point suggests a recognition that context is believed to be important regardless of one's role as a Designers or Implementers.

In summary, context-sensitive curricula translate into curricula that is flexible enough to be adjusted based on specific and changing needs of a community. Flexibility also means leaving room for Implementers to infuse into curricula their local knowledge

as well as their own ways of teaching what they know. To ensure context-sensitive curricula, Implementers are given agency in co-designing and applying SfC curricula. Following section will discuss the ways in which agency is incorporated.

Implementers' Agency in Co-Design and Application of SfC Curricula

Insights from having cultural awareness is the kind of knowledge that Designers rely on Implementers to provide them with. For this reason, Implementers are given a large degree of agency in both co-designing and applying curricula as they feel to be necessary and effective. As an example, an interviewee from NGO 2 shared the following about the extent to which Implementers ("coach") have control over determining which sport and non-sport components gets to be included in their sessions:

> Typically, a coach will design a season with each week focusing on a specific theme, and then sessions within that week will be focusing on different aspects of that theme. For example, the first week of programming in September is typically Welcome Week (national initiative), and so our theme is usually "Welcoming" — each day there are quotes and vocab around aspects of welcoming, and why it is important, etc. Then in terms of the soccer skill component - that is typically informed by the needs of the group, identified at previous practices/games, but typically also somewhat scoped out ahead of the season, so that skills can build upon previously covered material.

At this organization, Implementers select from a bank of pre-approved activities, videos, lesson plans, and worksheets that are created by Designers in order to form their own tailored curriculum. The use of a resource bank to which all Implementers have access is one way a baseline level of consistency is ensured across different program sites.

> Our current system is a very collaborative one with other sites across the US. We have compiled a bank of activities that coaches can pull from to add to their practice plans to form a 'curriculum.' It used to be very similar to this, just smaller scale within [city] staff. And just makes sense in terms of best option for students and for program.

Oftentimes, Implementers also play a role in the process of revising curricula. For example, one interviewee from NGO 7 emphasized that Implementers have a "different level of understanding of what the kids experience on a day to day basis, they know how the curriculum is actually working or not" and for this reason, the interviewee "never make changes without talking to them." The representative from NGO 1 echoed this approach through sharing about her reliance on Implementers to identify participants' needs before making any revisions:

> …so like this junior curriculum that is cast for me to work on, I have not moved forward it because I have not got consensus yet from team what our needs are for those kids so once I do and once I meet with everyone who works with those kids then I make a plan and I will communicate that with our staff about what I think the plan is and get their feedback on it and then I move forward on what would be our next step.

Similar to feedback from other interviewees, the interviewee from NGO 8 shared her belief that Implementers ("coaches") have a "better sense of the specific needs of their participants" as well as what "activities and services" can best address them. Reflecting this belief, the organization's structure is set-up to give Implementers decision-making power to determine the necessary activities and services. She expanded on this point:

> Coaches will always have a better sense of the specific needs of their participants, and what activities and services they would most benefit from. That is why our organization is non-hierarchical, and our model is adaptable to local contexts, to give coaches the power to make those types of decisions directly.

With an Implementers' unique understanding of what works comes their ability to gauge how a curriculum is perceived by participants. For example, Designers at NGO 5

had created their curriculum to be a "highly structured step-by-step process, specifying particular lessons for particular weeks" (resource from NGO 5). After collecting feedback from Implementers ("coaches"), they learned that participants were simply tolerating the lessons in order to play sport:

> Coaches found, however, that players would "go through the motions" during curriculum activity, viewing it merely as something to tolerate so that they could enjoy the rest of practice. Without active engagement, its lessons fell on deaf ears. (resource from NGO 5)

Leveraging Implementers' perception-based feedback, Designers revised their curriculum in a way that still communicated the intended lessons but gave Implementers greater agency to contribute to its design. As shared in the quote below, the key value of Implementers' input is believed to be in how they design lessons that "enables them to teach when children are most apt to listen":

> …implements the curriculum in two separate steps. First, players attend an intensive, three-day retreat, where coaches introduce them to the curriculum in full. Then, throughout the course of the season, coaches have broad freedom to draw on the curriculum as they see fit, waiting for teachable moments to re-emphasize a particular curriculum skill or activity. The specialness and rarity of a retreat ensures a captive audience, and giving coaches the freedom to plan their own lessons enables them to teach when children are most apt to listen. (resource from NGO 5)

Ensuring that Implementers have agency in co-designing and applying curricula as they feel to be necessary is tied to the belief that Implementers have unique perspective into context (i.e. cultural awareness) as well as the ability to recognize "teachable moments" where participants are more "apt to listen". The idea here is that when participants listen, then messages can be more clearly delivered, and at the least, be heard. Herein lies a key insight that connects to earlier findings of this Chapter derived

from thematic analysis of data: Implementers are believed to be the enzyme that facilitate changes within and between sport and non-sport components of SfC curricula. Specifically, Part III of this Chapter described how interviewees believe that effectively cultivating individuals' skills and abilities to overcome conflict is connected to how well (and explicitly) the applicability of lessons learned in sport settings to other contexts is communicated to participants. Because Implementers are the ones who consistently work with participants in real-time, they are in the most opportune position to make explicit the connection between sport and non-sport through teachable moments where lessons can be heard. Implementers are also instrumental because through their identification and use of teachable moments, they can facilitate participants' sense of self and belonging, and ability to connect with peers and adults – two requisites for enabling shifts in perspective that are believed to help individuals address conflict and create positive change. As the interviewee from NGO 5 stated, "at the end of the day, it is all about influence" and "no single group of people has more influence over the efficacy of programs than its coaches, those who interact with the young people every day."

So then, how can Implementers leverage teachable moments, and exert their "influence"? Following section will discuss the elements that Designers' believe to be important toward this aim.

How Implementers Can Best Leverage Teachable Moments

Designers identified a few elements that they believe to be essential for Implementers to leverage teachable moments, identified as moments in which participants are most apt to listen to lessons being taught. In part, this belief is connected

to the perceived ability of how influential the role of Implementers can be to an individuals' personal development. For example, the interviewee from NGO 2 shared that the social skills she developed through playing sport was influenced by the Implementers ("coaches") who had taught her. She stated, "I have had both the good, and the bad, and in the middle type of coach. So really saw how the role of the coach could impact myself as a player and my teammates as well." An interviewee from NGO 3 echoed this connection and added that his high school sport coach was "the most important mentor" for a long period of his life. This point further supports earlier findings in this Chapter that the personal experiences of SfC actors from having played sport shapes their understanding of what sport can do (foster individuals' development) and how to address conflict (through influential Implementers).

Most Designers included in this study expressed the belief that "skills and traits, rather than tangible qualifications (coaching license, etc.)" (interviewee from NGO 2) will enable Implementers to leverage teachable moments. While Implementers in this study were primarily found to be certified in trauma, CPR, mindfulness, social work, and clinical psychology, their ability to leverage teachable moments that help foster learning is believed to be connected to creating a supporting environment based on "inclusion and tolerance" (interviewee from NGO 8). As the interviewee from NGO 8 suggests in the quote below, inclusion and tolerance are necessary for creating safe spaces; safe spaces being a key finding from this study about SfC actors' use of sport to create positive change:

> To create an emotional safe space, coach-mentors should set a tone of inclusion and tolerance before the first session kicks-off. Coach-mentors

> are responsible for creating a supportive environment where players feel comfortable expressing themselves and celebrating inclusion.

Cultivating a reciprocity of respect was another element that Designers believe to be necessary for leveraging teachable moments. An interviewee from NGO 4 emphasized that respect enables a "clear" delivery of messages from Implementers to participants while also helping to develop connections in meaningful ways. And, respect is taught through "experiences and teachable moments" versus the through the activities that comprise SfC curricula. The interviewee stated the following:

> I think coaches can deliver messages. If a coach has the respect of his or her team, they can deliver clear messages...we don't need to pull the wool over the kids' eyes, to teach these things. I think some of these things can be taught based on clear messaging. It's one of the things that I actually enjoy about our program, is that it feels like a regular sports program. It doesn't feel like kids are coming through some after school program or we're trying to force things into their brain and change them. Those things happen through coaches that are able to connect with their kids in meaningful ways. That's true all the way up to the pro level. It's about the respect that the coach gives the players and the players give back to the coach. Those values happen, are learned through experiences and teachable moments instead of through some of the activity.

Creating a supportive environment based on inclusion, tolerance, and respect are elements that Designers believe will help Implementers to leverage teachable moments. More baseline than this however, is the ability of Implementers to stay "involved with the conversations that are happening with the kids" (interviewee from NGO 4) and retain a focus on "connecting and bonding with the kids" (interviewee from NGO 1). Designers did express the recognition that such a task can be difficult to do in "real time" (interviewee from NGO 3). In this sense, and as articulated by the interviewee from NGO 3, it is "more of an art than a science":

> At end of day it's more of an art than a science. Look, there is science to it, but how a coach has a difficult conversation with a young people, you can develop tools for how to do it but it still has to be executed in real time and requires someone to be able to put the right words together and to do it with authenticity, confidence - those are hard things to do well.

In summary, Implementers and Designers ensure communication between one another through trainings and workshops that serve to inform and guide the former when applying curricula. Face-to-face meetings and other technical means of communication (phone, email) are also utilized to promote information-sharing about how curricula relate to participants of the SfC program in real time. Although Implementers are provided with guidelines and lesson plans, Designers perceive their knowledge to be of great value. By virtue of working directly with participants, Implementers' gain knowledge that is derived from the context and specific needs (i.e. cultural awareness) of the communities in which the curricula are applied. Such knowledge is collected to ensure that SfC curricula is context-specific and flexible enough to be adjusted based on specific and changing needs of a community. Given Implementers insights, they have agency to co-design and apply curricula as they feel to be necessary for effectively meeting the needs of program participants.

Designers also believe that first-hand contextual knowledge of Implementers gives them the ability to recognize teachable moments where participants are more receptive to listen. The idea here is that when participants listen, then messages can be more clearly delivered and heard. In this sense, Implementers are believed to be critical to facilitating changes within and between sport and non-sport components of SfC curricula.

Creating a supportive environment based on inclusion, tolerance, and respect are elements that Designers believe will help Implementers to leverage teachable moments, thereby increasing opportunities that foster connections with kids in meaningful ways. This process is, as the interviewee from NGO 3 stated "more of an art than a science". To better understand the "art" of Implementers and unearth what they do requires observing them in real-time (in practice).

As part of the research design in this study, observations and post-observation interviews were conducted with four SfC programs from the original sample of 10 NGOs – programs which demonstrated the greatest difference in how and why sport was used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change. Specifically, observation of and post-observation interviews with Implementers explored the following key ideas that emerged from the thematic analysis of interview data in this study:

- creation of safe spaces
- fostering shifts in perception of self and others
- making connections between sport and non-sport contexts
- leveraging teachable moments

The following section, Part V: Exploring the Art of Implementers through Observations will discuss these ideas through the lens of observing (and then interviewing) Implementers as they apply curricula in real-time.

Part V: Exploring the Art of Implementers through Observations

The relevance of observations stems from the need to explore what Designers, who are chiefly responsible for creating SfC curricula, believe is happening toward their

goal to address conflict and create positive change. Findings of this study have revealed that Designers rely heavily on the insights of Implementers, specifically on what Implementers know and do when applying curricula in order to effectively meet the needs of program participants; where basic human needs (to feel safe, to connect, to belong) have been identified as a key component of conflict as perceived by SfC actors. Such a reliance necessitates the need to understand the "art" of Implementers – what they do and teach in practice. One effective way to address this need is through observing Implementers as they conduct their work. Follow-up interviews with Implementers were conducted to probe deeper into what was observed, the knowledge they bring to practice, and how they disseminate that knowledge.

Part V of this Chapter describes findings derived from observation of Implementers as well as those from post-observation interviews with them. Specifically, Part V describes the way in which Implementers create safe spaces, how they foster shifts in perception of self and others, how dialogue is used to explore connections between lessons learned in sport and play to non-sport context (life), and lastly, skills that enable Implementers to leverage teachable moments. Such knowledge will further an understanding of how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change.

Bridging What Designers Believe and What Implementers Do

In order to explore the thinking behind how and why sport is used to address conflict and create positive change, this research study utilized a methodology that was comprised of interviewing Designers who create SfC curricula at NGOs which have

programs operating in the United States. From the data obtained during these interviews, four NGO programs were selected for observation as a means to gain further insight into what happens when curricula are applied in real-time with participants. Using thematic analysis of interviews, selection was based on programs which showed the most difference in how sport is conceptualized and how sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change. Specifically, differences were operationalized into four components: what sport was used (so as to ensure diversity), how sport was used, how change was believed to transpire through curricula, and specific outcomes to ensure diversity of goals included in the sample (academic success, assimilation of immigrants, mental health, and delivering quality education). Additionally, the level of engagement by the NGO representatives and availability of programs were other considerations when selecting the four programs for observation. For example, not all programs were implemented throughout the year given that the majority of them operate at local schools and follow a nine-month school calendar. The availability of sessions was, therefore, one determining factor in selecting the four programs. All observations were conducted in 2017. Post-observation interviews were conducted immediately afterward with each Implementer who led the session.

Following sections describe findings derived from observations by synthesizing them in the context of findings described throughout this Chapter. Doing so frames the discussion around what Designers *believe is happening* and *what is happening* when Implementers apply curricula in real-time with participants. Each section begins with a

specific revisit to what Designers have expressed and follows with insights collected from observing Implementers.

Two Ways to Ensure Safe Spaces

Designers in this study helped to identify that sport is used as a vehicle that initiates a process of facilitating shifts in perception. Through the services and opportunities offered in non-sport components of SfC curricula, perceptions are believed to be more internalized and serve as the driving force that guides future actions of participants toward positive change. Toward this aim, Designers strive to increase the quality of safe spaces that foster openness and satisfies participants' need to feel safe, to belong, and to connect. The researcher found that in application such safe spaces is linked to satisfying the need to belong and ensuring the comfort of participants through the physical set-up of space.

In Observation One the researcher noticed that participants in the session were quite free in their physical and verbal expressions from the moment they ran into the gym with excitement and familiarity. Their sense of belonging to that space and comfort in interacting with their peers became evident in the enjoyment and camaraderie they showed during training and discussions (i.e. sitting in close proximity to their peers, making jokes with one another). There was comfort and familiarity with each other and with the space.

In Observation Two, the Implementer conducted a tutoring session and then proceeded to the soccer field, both at a local school. The researcher observed that participants were not only relaxed in the classroom and on the field, they were also

comfortable to the point where some had carved out their own spots on the floor and in the hallway (mostly in groups). Instead of positioning students in a way that worked for her, the Implementer would at times speak with participants from where they sat, an approach that seemed to help participants relax and be open. In this way, the Implementer had allowed participants to feel a sense of belonging to the space. Moreover, comfort and openness are believed by the Implementer to be connected to trust-building – all of which can inform the design of interventions. The Implementer expanded on this point:

> I have gained insight on how to work with specific students who might be coming from very traumatic backgrounds. I think it's important for a coach to form a bond of trust with students and make sure they feel comfortable. It's when they are comfortable enough that they might start to open up about their experiences and that, in the end, can help them cope or understand their own feelings or experiences.

The effectiveness of safe spaces which enable particpants to belong, to feel comfortable and open (i.e. safe) and connect with others was also believed to be directly related to creating a "family atmosphere". The Implementer from Observation Three shared that despite his organization's efforts to offer safe spaces over a long-term period (from middle school through high school), a key focus lies in creating an atmophere in which "students are comfortable and enjoy being here":

> We set certain outcomes that we want to see each year including our students hitting certain grade and attendance benchmarks, competing in a certain number of squash matches, attending travel opportunities, etc…While we have many outcomes and benchmarks that we want to meet, one of our main goals it to provide a family atmosphere in which students are comfortable and enjoy being here.

In application, the researcher observed that the physical design of the space contributed to this point. The sport training in Observation Three took place at a recreation center while

non-sport components (community service, academic tutoring) took place on the lower level of the adjacent building. With couches, tables, desks, and different rooms available, the researcher noticed that participants made themselves 'at home' through their seemingly genuine interactions (loud, joking around, no sense of urgency, high level of engagement on task at hand) with peers and adult staff members. On the squash courts, participants were thoroughly engaged in playing the sport with peers and the Implementer, who remained focused and mobile between one court to another.

In summary, Implementers create safe spaces that are comfortable for participants, fosters openness, familiarity, trust, and satsifies a sense of belonging. To do so, it is important for participants to be engrossed in an atmostphere that emphasizes belonging (family) as well as their physically comfort in the space. While the concept of safe spaces was explained by Designers, it was not done in such specific, tangible ways.

Three Ways to Encouraging Shifts

As an important change outcome, Designers referenced shifts in perception of self and others primarily through encouraging individuals to re-imagine new ways of being and thinking (existing realities). The researcher found that in application such shifts are encouraged in three specific ways through sport and play: exercising agency over perception-making, creating a new culture among other cultures, and activating biological senses to experience conflict.

During one instance in Observation One, a participant (who has autism) refused to continue playing and withdrew from the group. As he stepped away from the drill area, the Implementer approached him and engaged in a private conversation on the sideline.

When they both came back the Implementer asked the participant if he would like to be cheered on by his teammates when it was his turn to dribble the ball. He responded with a yes, and as he began dribbling, his teammates and the Implementer cheered him on – clapping, shouting words of encouragement – all directed toward him. The smile on the kid's face as well as the show of team support was undeniable in that moment.

The Implementer explained later to the researcher that this particular student has trouble regulating his emotions which can fluctuate often and at any given time. Through the context of sport, the Implementer intervened in order to give him the chance to examine his self-perception (dictated by his emotions) and perception of others (whether or not he could relate and belong to the team). Having the opportunity to re-imagine a new reality (way of being and thinking) and also exercise agency over his perceptions and experiences is something that, as the Implementer also explained afterward, youth who experience trauma and come from underserved communities do not get the chance to do often.

As another example, the Implementer from Observation Two expressed that sport has given the participants (and the organization) a "family" and formed relationships that have a "much deeper meaning". She stated the following:

> Many of our participants and myself would define our organization as family. Past what we do on the soccer field and in the classroom, relationships formed are something that have a much deeper meaning. Sport has given us this family.

In application, the researcher observed how sport can create a "much deeper meaning". During soccer training, two boys who had stepped out of the game began passing the ball to each other. One of the boys had moved to the United States from Afghanistan just 10

days prior. He and the other boy did not know each other nor did they speak the same language but they both knew how to pass a soccer ball, which is exactly what they did. The researcher observed a live example of how sport could serve as an alternative language in the absence of a common (verbal) language. Such an incident is exactly the kind of interaction the Implementer believes to have cultivated meaningful relationships and the sense of family. She explained further:

> Sport is a way in which anyone can connect. Soccer specifically is a universal language and I have personally seen it bring together people from anywhere around the world. I have seen sport bring together people who otherwise would never connect or be allowed to communicate and interact.

The researcher also observed that each player had the chance to dribble the ball, meaning that no one appeared to be left out. Girls with hijab, girls without hijab, and boys speaking different languages would pass the ball to one another regardless of their looks, religion, or physical ability. Two boys in particular would communicate in broken English ("me!" "here!") as their way of signaling their availability to receive a pass. When a score was made as result of their teamwork, they both cheered and embraced. The researcher noted that the live action of sport (an element mentioned by the Designer from NGO 1) enabled for a much more 'involved' way for participants to develop their language literacy versus the traditional method of sitting in a classroom that primarily engaged the mind. This observation suggests a connection between mind and the body, where inclusion of physicality (or physical expressions) can tap into another layer of learning.

Beyond language literacy, however, the researcher observed that within these live action moments, the Implementer and participants had created their own way of communicating and their own norms (i.e. mixed gender teams, girls with hijab playing sport openly, celebratory embraces upon making a goal, displays of sportsmanship, friendships despite race, religion, and language) – it was the makings of a re-imagined culture among other existing cultures. The researcher noted the culture-making ability of sport helps participants to re-imagine their existing realities in the sense that the new culture expands the boundaries and norms from which they view themselves and others.

Another example of re-imagining existing realities took place in Observation Four, where the Implementer-Designer facilitated play activities to simulate challenges that participants themselves (adult educators) identified, such as communication challenges with youth that inhibit the delivery of quality education. In one of the observed play activities, participants were given plastic cups and instructed to make four lines of five individuals. Starting with the first persons on one end of each line, the aim of the game was to pour one's water into the cup of the person next in line without spilling and without moving from one's spot. Once the last person's cup was filled, the line would shift down so each person had a new position. The winner of the activity was determined once all members of one line had stood as first in line.

Three challenges were incorporated into the activity to make it more difficult to communicate. First, participants were not allowed to move from their marks once in position which limited their freedom to move. In order to pour their water into the cup of the person standing next to them, they had to reach across the distance. Second, those

standing in the middle position of each line were blindfolded which added another layer of restriction for the participants as their reliance on sight as well as mobility were taken away. Third, the persons standing at the end of each line had to hold their cups using elastic bands, not their hands.

The researcher noted several important observations. First, the participants were full of emotions – happy, anxious, frustrated – in their efforts to fulfill their roles and win the activity. Second, similar to traditional sport trainings in other observations, individuals' biological senses (touching, hearing, seeing, and feeling) were activated as they played their way through an activity designed to simulate communication challenges. Third, the researcher observed that the Implementer was mostly focused on enforcing the rules and by way facilitating the manipulation of senses to help participants immerse themselves in communication challenges (i.e. making sure blindfolds were on completely so as to manipulate sight).

The Implementer stated that such play activities can help individuals to "experience tensions and alignments with what they just experienced in a game" and facilitate thinking on the matter with others during discussions. More pointedly in regard to conflict and creating positive change, the Implementer stressed that play activities support participants to be "more fearless" and "engage with the challenge and not shy away from it". What results, believes the Implementer, is a "perspective shift" that increases their sense of self and "community ownership". Essentially, play is believed to "facilitate this now bottom up approach when it comes to engaging with conflict" (access to resources and opportunities). She stated the following:

> And I think that change, that change leads to larger pieces when we're thinking about opportunity gaps, when we're thinking about lack of resources. It might not ever come top down. So it has to be the community that says we deserve this. And so it makes me feel good. Like when I see in one of her responses like "you made me feel comfortable using my voice again" or "you made me feel comfortable", "you made me feel like a good teacher", "you made me feel like I mean something." That is just a really big change you know. And that's a perspective shift, and that means so much.

The Implementer further explained that through her work using play, she has realized the "motivation" or "desire" to create "socioeconomic change" or any other kind of change which betters one's life cannot be injected into someone. It can only come from within an individual. She stated the following:

> But what I've come to realize in this work is that that's not something for me to intrinsically put in anybody, that that motivation, that desire, all of that actually has to come from within and it has to come from the individual.

This point helps to operationalize conflict as an intra-relational phenomenon beyond the lack of belief in self, as described earlier in this Chapter. Conflict is also the lack of motivation to create change beyond the self (the macro-level change). Through play, the Implementers seeks to help individuals confront challenges and recognize their innate capabilities to resolve them.

In summary, shifts in perception of self and others is believed to transpire through encouraging individuals to re-imagine new ways of being and thinking. The researcher found that in application such shifts can take place in three ways: helping individuals to exercise agency over their perception-making abilities, creating a new culture among other cultures using sport as the common language, and activating biological senses through play activities that are designed to simulate challenges within conflict. The

element of physicality and live action of sport and play activities is key to the above processes because it taps into another layer of learning beyond what the mind can grasp.

Through observation, the researcher also found that conflict as an intra-relational phenomenon can be operationalized as an individual's lack of motivation to create change beyond self. This finding adds yet another layer to how conflict is perceived as a form of harm such as lack of belief in self.

Although Designers were seemingly attuned to these processes, they did not articulate them in ways that Implementers shared and demonstrated; perhaps because their role to design SfC curricula is primarily driven by learning from the mind and not so much from being physically present with participants.

Facilitating Dialogue to Explore Connections between Sport and Non-Sport Contexts

Designers expressed the importance of dialogue sessions in SfC curricula to help individuals reflect upon their lessons learned in sport or play sessions and also explore its applicability to life contexts. The researcher observed that such a sport-to-life connection is made by Implementers through asking explicit questions.

In Observation Two, brief discussion sessions are held after sport sessions. The researcher observed the team and Implementer convene on the field and discuss the lesson of that week – to "celebrate" (each week of the season has a specific concept). The participants were asked to reflect on the meaning of this term. Those who could utilize their English to communicate offered their thoughts: social, fun, and enjoyable occasions. The Implementer leveraged the discussion to emphasize the importance of celebrating people so as to be welcoming to others - similar to how participants welcomed their

diverse group of team members on the soccer field. The participants' behaviors on the field were therefore framed within the concept of inclusiveness and assimilation. Such a framing emphasizes an emerging theme from observations that the art of Implementers has something to do with connecting learning derived from physical expressions and learning from the mind.

In Observation Four, the Implementer asked gently probing questions to help participants explore connections between play and life. For example, in regard to the water cup activity described above, the Implementer asked participants to identify which of the challenges posed the greatest obstacle: the blindfold, restricted movement, or the elastic band that held up the cup. Several shared that the blindfold challenge limited them most because it required a different level of communication and strategy among the line-mates. One participant shared that before the game began she and the lady next to her strategized about fist bumping when blindfolded so as to leverage their physical connection to guide the pouring of water from one cup into another. What they forgot, she stated, was to include the person on the other side who would also receive the water from the blindfolded person. In connecting this lesson to life, the same participant followed up to add that having a strategy which drives communications with kids and their parents (persons on both side) is necessary, should be inclusive, and might also have to be tweaked for each child/family.

The Implementer pressed on by asking how the participants' experiences with communication and strategy from the play activity could relate to better preparing children to transition from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten. One participant shared that

each child might require a different strategy for learning, while another shared that communication styles that resonate with each child might differ given his/her cultural background – insights derived from having physically explored communication challenges through play and then reflected on in non-sport contexts.

Sometimes, asking probing questions can yield seemingly random information that provide Implementers with first-hand insight into the kinds of conflict that their participants face. As an example, the sport sessions at Observation One begins and concludes with a "circle up" where participants are introduced to and then review the lesson of that day, such as the "prosocial skill" of "not giving up". At the observed session, participants were asked to share their "swoosh" (sport terminology translated to mean achievements, highlights) and/or their "misses" (sport terminology translated to mean things that did not go as desired or intended) since the last time the group met. Such indirect questions can oftentimes lead to sharing of sensitive information in front of the group. The Implementer described an example where one participant revealed that his miss for the week was a "domestic violence" incident (due to confidentiality reasons, details of the incident could not be shared with the researcher). In such a case, the Implementer had acted on the information by recording it in the daily session notes and by sharing it with the rest of the staff composed of the Designer and other Implementers – further emphasizing the feedback loops between them as described in Part IV of this Chapter.

In summary, dialogue sessions in SfC curricula are used chiefly to make explicit the connection between lessons learned in sport to life contexts. Toward this aim,

Implementers pose questions that encourage participants to explore meanings behind words (to celebrate, to not give up), to discover solutions to challenges that allow conflict to ensue, and that encourage participants to feel open enough to share sensitive information about the conflicts they face. Within the framing of questions asked by Implementers exists the connection between learning derived physical expressions and learning from the mind. So, it is not simply about making connections explicit, as Designers expressed, but rather about connecting participants' behaviors (physical expressions) to their thinking (perceptions).

Skills that Enable Implementers to Leverage Teachable Moments

Through observations, the researcher found that three areas provide insight into what Implementers do in practice: creating safe spaces, encouraging shifts in perception of self and others, and facilitating dialogue to explore connections between sport and non-sport contexts. It was also found that Implementers use certain skills and abilities to ensure the effectiveness of these areas: communicating clearly, multi-tasking and thinking quickly, managing silent moments, and stepping outside of their Implementer role. Such a skillset enables Implementers to recognize and leverage teachable moments; moments in which participants are most apt to listen, as described by Designers.

For example, the Implementer from Observation Two led a group of 20 participants in the non-sport classroom session and then transitioned to the soccer field where she gave instructions, taught and managed small groups, led a discussion, and transitioned back to the classroom to close out the session. Specifically, she had to maintain an awareness of time, participants' safety, and the interactions between the

participants. Among multi-tasking, it was important for her to communicate instructions clearly to make sure that transitions were smooth and every participant understood what was happening, particularly the non-English speakers.

The Implementer later explained that from her vantage point she is able to watch participants' reactions as activities unfold and then make adjustments as necessary. This requires the ability to "learn how to think quick" on her feet, suggesting a link between watching for reactions and knowing what to do at the right time. And herein lies the advantage of Implementers who are directly engaged with participants in real-time over Designers who are more removed and chiefly in charge of developing curricula. The Implementer from Observation Two stated the following in reference to a "telephone" game designed to improve communication skills:

> …to see how students respond to the activity, continue making positive connections with them, as well as learn how to think quick on my feet as adjustments need to be made. There's a lot of little things like thinking quickly and being flexible, that coaches get to learn and develop along the way, less likely with those who are just writing or developing plans.

Sometimes, participants' reaction is to be silent. During the dialogue session in Observation Four about how to help youth transition from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten, the Implementer was met with silence when she asked "what are some characteristics of good transitions?" The Implementer was met with silence which she accepted by simply not filling the space with words. After a few minutes, she reframed the question to "what makes a successful transition for a pre-k child going to kindergarten?" Several responses were then shared. The researcher noticed that the Implementer was also skilled at following the trail of feedback provided by the

participants. For example, she did not insert any comments that would even slightly divert the discussion one way or another. Instead, she focused on letting the participants drive the conversation while encouraging them to dig deeper into what they already knew from having worked with pre-kindergarten kids. Essentially, she stayed attuned to the flow of participants' reactions as they elicited their ideas about successfully ensuring a child's transition into pre-kindergarten.

The Implementer at Observation One demonstrated the ability to shift roles from an authority figure to a participant and back. For example, she participated on and off in the sport drills and the kids seemed to love it. They would watch how the Implementer moved and what she did, and in that moment, it appeared as though she had become the participant. Alternating between the role of an authority figure and a participant was effective because the group seemed to welcome it, while for the Implementer it was another avenue through which to enter the participants' realities and relate to them.

In summary, Implementers demonstrated the ability to be a clear communicator, multi-task and think quickly, know how to manage silent moments, and alternate between the role of an Implementer and participant. These abilities helped them to recognize and leverage teachable moments. Specifically, observations helped to reveal that having the vantage point of watching participants' reactions (silence, level of physical engagement, sharing of personal information, development of new relationships, exercising control or lack thereof over emotions and environment) is key to knowing what to do in practice. And herein lies the piece that Designers cannot plan for or predict – it can only come from those who engaged in practice.

Summary of Findings

Findings in this Chapter were split into five parts, where each revealed information that helped to understand how and why sport is used to address conflict and change. The following section revisits key findings from all parts.

Through interviews with SfC actors, it was found that sport is primarily defined in terms of what it can do, as opposed to what it is. Sport is believed to have the ability to connect people, include competition, develop identity, involve teaching, attract people, and it has the ability to act as a space where social-emotional skills and life skills can be exercised. Such abilities align with those which SfC actors experienced during their time as athletes, and which became so much a part of their personal development (i.e. trust, communication, relationship building, community-building) and career choices. Given that sport had acted as a positive and empowering theme in SfC actors' lives, albeit in slightly different ways, the experiences it lent them as individuals became the dominant lens through which the world – its conflict and its solutions – was viewed.

Three key assumptions emerged from exploring what sport means to SfC actors. The first is that SfC actors believe that what sport can do is replicable for others. The second assumption is that the physicality of sport is believed to be the fundamental piece that allows for the freedom of expression through which individuals are able to exercise agency, despite any existing phenomena such as conflict. These two assumptions connect to a third assumption, that the abilities of sport can indeed be used by individuals to address conflict and create positive change.

The individual-level focus carries into SfC actors' conceptualization of conflict. SfC actors in this study perceive conflict in three ways: as an internal phenomenon within and between individuals that can manifest as a form of harm (lack of belief in self); as an opportunity for individual growth; and as a structural phenomenon that translates as a lack of access to resources and opportunities and which prevents the fulfillment of basic human needs.

These perceptions underpin SfC actors' curricula; curricula which are also informed through assessments of context and its challenges. Designers included in this study use statistical data and internally-led assessments to obtain information about the issues and concerns they seek to address. Statistical data provides factual information while assessments provide implicit first-hand knowledge that enable Designers to learn what lack of access means in the context of where participants live, how it affects their livelihood and their individual needs (particularly as they revise or update curricula). Information gathered through statistical data and assessments is utilized to identify which add-on components are needed and that supplement the use of sport for addressing conflict. One curriculum deviates from this approach in the sense that assessments are given to each incoming cohort of participants in order to identify their needs and desired outcomes. This information is then used to create a tailored curriculum for the cohort, relying on the use of play and no other add-on non-sport component.

SfC curricula included in this study are also grounded and shaped by concepts, theories, and frameworks from scholarship of a variety of disciplines. A small percentage of them incorporate knowledge from conflict and peace studies such as Contact

Hypothesis Theory, Lederach's "hubs", Sherifs' superordinate goals, and conflict resolution strategies based in negotiation as well as restorative justice approaches. However, SfC curricula is predominantly grounded in scholarship from clinical and education psychology, childhood development, and organizational leadership. Among the NGOs, the few that had readily available ToC (or logic model in a couple of cases) to share with the researcher were also able to identify the scholarship that underpinned their curricula. This finding suggests that an interplay between scholarship and what one believes can happen may help Designers to explain causation with clearer articulation. It also suggests how (and from where) SfC actors develop their understanding of what is conflict and how to address it.

SfC programs in this study address conflict primarily by improving access to services and opportunities through offering sport and non-sport components such as mental health services, academic support, and mentoring opportunities. Some do so using a combined 'plus sport-sport plus' approach that serve to increase access to a particular sport (i.e. traditionally elitist sport, lacrosse and squash) while at the same time offer programs that seek to foster positive change. Findings showed that regardless, when using sport the goal is to create safe spaces that foster a sense of openness, fulfill basic human needs (to feel safe, to connect, to belong), and encourage individuals to re-imagine their existing ideas of what is possible (shifts in perception).

Shifts as re-imagination of individuals' existing ways of thinking and being emerged as a key element in this study. First, it is dependent on development of skills and abilities that are believed to promote positive changes within (awareness of self) and

between individuals (relationship-building). For example, they are communication (listening), awareness of others, identifying and processing emotions, taking ownership of what transpires in one's immediate environment, embracing the challenges of conflict, and focusing on life-long learning. Cultivating skills that prioritize learning of self and others in different kinds of situations – such as in emotionally tense situations – is believed to enable individuals to create change at other levels of society, essentially as agents of change.

Second, shifts are believed to transpire at two loci of change in SfC curricula included in this study: spaces between existing reality and re-imagined reality, and spaces within frozen reality. The former utilizes sport and non-sport components to teach and reinforce pre-set desired outcomes to its participants. The latter approach, spaces within frozen reality, relies heavily on embracing conflict through play activities and dialogue sessions, but without the non-sport components to teach and reinforce outcomes. Regardless of the approach, SfC curricula use sport and play as the vehicle to address conflict as an internal phenomenon (emotions and thoughts), as an opportunity for growth (awareness of self and others), as a form of harm (toward self and others), and as a lack of access to services and opportunities (academic support, mental health services, professional development). The pathway toward change in SfC curricula included in this study is premised on the assumption that individuals, having the necessary skills and innate agency, are at the locus of change.

To facilitate such a pathway of change, Designers rely heavily on Implementers, those who work directly with program participants, to use sport as an effective process-

inducing vehicle (i.e. the process of shifts). Given so, efforts are made to ensure communication between Designers and Implementers. Communication takes place in two primary ways. First, trainings and workshops are offered to inform Implementers about relevant knowledge with which they can effectively teach, connect with kids, and reflect upon their behaviors in the process. Second, communication between Designers and Implementers is encouraged though feedback systems (face-to-face, phone, virtual meetings) that enable information-sharing about curricula and how it relates to target audiences.

What Implementers know – and its perceived value – was found to be a critical piece to ensuring the effectiveness of SfC curricula. By virtue of working directly with participants, Designers believe that Implementers' gain knowledge derived from the context and specific needs (i.e. cultural awareness) of the communities in which curricula are applied. Such knowledge is collected to ensure that SfC curricula is context-specific and flexible enough to be adjusted based on specific and changing needs of communities. Given Implementers insights, they have agency to co-design and apply curricula as they feel to be necessary for effectively meeting the needs of program participants.

Designers also believe that first-hand contextual knowledge of Implementers gives them the ability to recognize teachable moments where participants are more receptive to listen to lessons being taught. Creating a supportive environment based on inclusion, tolerance, and respect are elements that Designers believe will help Implementers to leverage teachable moments, thereby increasing opportunities that foster connections with kids in meaningful ways – connections that promote individual and

relational skills believed to be necessary for overcoming conflict and creating change beyond self.

Observations of and post-observation interviews with Implementers undertaken in this study helped to unearth what they do, what they know, and how they teach what they know. Moreover, observations provided specifics that Designers did not articulate and that helped operationalize concepts such as conflict as the lack of motivation to create change beyond the level of self (socio-economic), what comprises safe spaces, shifts in perception of self and others, making connections between sport and non-sport contexts, and what teachable moments entail.

For example, Implementers create safe spaces that are comfortable for participants, foster openness, familiarity, trust, and that satisfy a sense of belonging. To do so, they cultivate an atmosphere that emphasizes belonging (family) as well as participants' physical comfort in the space. As another example, Designers expressed that shifts in perception of self and others transpire through encouraging individuals to re-imagine new ways of being and thinking. The researcher found that in application shifts can take place in three ways: helping individuals to exercise agency over their perception-making abilities, creating a new culture among other cultures using sport as the common language, and activating biological senses through play activities that are designed to simulate challenges of conflict. The element of physicality and live action enabled through sport and play activities was observed as key to the above processes because it taps into another layer of learning beyond what the mind can grasp.

More specifically, biological senses such as sight are manipulated by Implementers so as to facilitate a process that enables participants to understand conflict and its challenges at a more intimate (physical) level of understanding. Implementers facilitate dialogue sessions where they ask open-ended probing questions that encourage participants to reflect on potential connections between learning derived from physical expressions in sport and learning from the mind. Therefore, it is not simply about making connections between sport and non-sport components to be explicit, as Designers had expressed, but rather about connecting participants' behaviors (physical expressions) to their thinking (perceptions). To do so, observations revealed that Implementers exercise the ability to be a clear communicator, to multi-task and think quickly, to manage silent moments, and alternate between the role of an Implementer and participant. Such abilities help Implementers to recognize and leverage teachable moments, specifically through watching participants reactions (silence, level of physical engagement, sharing of personal information, development of new relationships, exercising control or lack thereof over emotions and environment). Armed with their abilities and the vantage point of watching participants' reactions, Implementers know what works and what to do in practice.

So, how does the above findings tie more directly into conflict and change? Chapter 5 Discussion of Findings will synthesize findings with the literature review in order to better understand some of the deeper connections.

CHAPTER FIVE: REVISITING LITERATURE REVIEW AND FINDINGS

Introduction

Responding to scholars' critique that SfC programs are without well-defined ToC that identify the most efficacious ways to promote certain outcomes and impacts (Whitley 2018 quoting Coalter 2015; Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, Smith 2017), this research study explored how and why sport is used to address conflict and create positive change. Toward this endeavor, the following research questions were explored: How does sport address conflict? Why is sport used as a vehicle for positive change and how does sport facilitate such change? What kinds of knowledge inform the construction of SfC curricula? What are the ways in which SfC actors reflect upon their work? Such an exploration spotlights a focus on the need for developing "context specific theories of change…prior to program design, implementation, and evaluation" (Whitley et al. 2015).

This Chapter revisits the literature review and findings in relation to the research questions of this study. Organizationally, each section begins with describing findings from this research study followed by a revisit to the literature review that serves to highlight connection(s) between findings and scholarly knowledge from experts. Specifically, the five sections are how sport and conflict coincide, the concept of shifts as the bridge between conflict resolution and SfC, the use of sport in dialogue to shift

perceptions, designing curricula for context, and how SfC ToC coincide with conflict theory.

How Sport and Conflict Coincide

Sport is identified as providing "windows into societies and cultures" (Coakley 2015, 11), thereby reflecting the happenings, and arguably conflicts, of the world. It has the ability to relate to the social and cultural contexts in which we live, and provide stories and images that can help to explain and evaluate contexts (i.e. major spheres of life such as family, economy, media, politics, education, religion) (Coakley 2015). With respect to this research study into conflict, sport is relevant given that the happenings of the world are argued to "write" the field of conflict resolution (Avruch 2013). Examining the ways in which sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict in society can provide important and timely insights that deepen an understanding of conflict as well as ways to intervene. Specifically, those who respond to conflict through sport-based interventions, SfC actors (Designers and Implementers) and their programs included in this study helped to unearth assumptions about sport and conflict; assumptions which can better explain how and why sport is used to address conflict and create positive change.

Findings from this study revealed that SfC actors understand sport in terms of what it can do, as opposed to what it is. Sport is believed to have the ability to connect people, include competition, develop identity, involve teaching, attract people, and it has the ability to act as a space where individuals can exercise social-emotional skills and life skills. These abilities align with the widely accepted assertion of what sport can do as outlined by the SDP IWG (2008). More so, they support Schinke and Hanrahan (2012)

and Delaney and Madigan's (2009) identification of sport as a process that enriches people by offering the possibility of solutions where change might be needed at the individual or community level. This study also found that sport's abilities are those which SfC actors gained during their time as athletes and which became so much a part of their personal development (i.e. trust, communication, relationship building, community-building) and career choices. Given that sport had acted as a positive and empowering theme in SfC actors' lives, the experiences it lent them as individuals became the dominant lens through which the world – its conflict and its solutions – was viewed.

Three key assumptions emerged from exploring what sport means to SfC actors through discussing their personal and professional backgrounds. The first is that SfC actors believe that what sport can do is replicable for others. This finding only partly validates Coakley's (2015) Great Sport Myth that refers to the widespread belief of sport as an inherent force of good and that positive experiences from sport are applicable for all persons who play sport. Such a belief has perpetuated "the view of sport as an apolitical, neutral, and inherently integrative set of social practices that can deliver a wide range of positive outcomes" (Massey and Whitley 2016 quoting Coalter 2010, 296). While findings did suggest the notion of replicability of positive experiences from sport for others, SfC actors also expressed the significance of how sport is used as a vehicle. For example, the "model of performance" is one which is believed to "create masters of sport not develop students" (Implementer from NGO 1) whereas the exact opposite model develops students, not masters of sport; the latter approach is purported to be used by all SfC actors in this study. Additionally, the role and abilities of Implementers such as

coaches and facilitators (discussed in Chapter Four) is believed to influence the kinds of outcomes which can be cultivated through the use of sport and play activities. In this way, the Great Sport Myth and the above-mentioned belief it has perpetuated does not adequately capture how and why SfC actors utilize sport to address conflict and create positive change.

The second assumption found through this study is that the physicality of sport is believed to be the fundamental piece that allows for the freedom of expression through which individuals are able to exercise agency, despite any existing phenomena such as conflict. The first two assumptions connect to a third assumption, that the abilities of sport (derived from this study) can indeed be used by individuals to address conflict and create positive change.

The individual-level focus carries into SfC actors' conceptualization of conflict. SfC actors in this study perceive conflict in three ways: as an internal phenomenon within and between individuals that can manifest as a form of harm (lack of belief in self); as an opportunity for individual growth; and as a structural phenomenon that translates as a lack of access to resources and opportunities and which prevents the fulfillment of basic human needs. A fourth conceptualization of conflict emerged through discussion with an Implementer, who expressed that conflict is the lack of motivation to create change beyond the level of self, such as socio-economic change (more on the significance of what Implementers know is weaved into subsequent sections). Although there is a recognition of structural factors, conflict is predominantly understood as a phenomenon that circles back to the individual.

Because SfC actors experienced positive change through gaining self-confidence, the sense of belonging and safety, and connecting with others, the absence of these 'needs' has come to represent root causes of conflict. Even with the recognition that lack of access to resources and opportunities is created by structural violence, SfC actors continue to perceive such a lack of access in terms of prevention of human needs – needs that for them were fulfilled through the vehicle of sport and that enabled them to thrive in other areas of life despite any obstacles. In this sense SfC actors adopt a Burtonian lens to conflict, where basic human needs such as identity, recognition, security and personal development cannot be negotiated away in the process of resolution. Accordingly, SfC programs focus heavily on individuals' development so as to help their participants overcome conflict.

This finding provides a counter argument to Coalter's (2010) critique that "micro-level effects are, wrongly, generalized to the macro-level" (205); the critique is misplaced because it discredits SfC actors' experiences and resulting perceptions (individual, micro level) of what sport has done for them in relation to how they perceive conflict at the macro level (fulfilling basic human needs that enable them to successfully gain access to resources and opportunities beyond SfC programs). This study's exploration into how and why SfC actors and programs use sport to address conflict has helped to highlight that scholars and practitioners are essentially having two related yet different conversations. SfC actors' assumptions are based on their personal experiences that define what conflict is; they do not conceptualize nor do they operate purely from how macro-level conflict is understood in scholarship.

This point is further strengthened through findings from this study that only a small percentage of SfC curricula is grounded in knowledge from conflict and peace studies, true to Cárdenas's (2012) claim that few SfC programs are rooted in existing conflict resolution theories. Those in this study incorporate Contact Hypothesis Theory, Lederach's "hubs", Sherifs' superordinate goals, and conflict resolution strategies based in negotiation as well as restorative justice approaches. It was also found that when teaching "conflict resolution skills", the content came from random online sources outlining step-by-step guides to resolving inter-relational conflict. On the other hand, the majority of SfC curricula in this study are predominantly grounded in scholarship from clinical and education psychology, childhood development, and organizational leadership.

In summary, exploring what conflict and sport mean revealed that understanding what sport can do and how it can address conflict is intricately linked to SfC actors' – conflict interveners – personal and professional experiences through sport. Their understanding of sport aligns with the literature on sport's purported abilities, while their conceptualization of conflict is only partly connected to conflict and peace literature. Because conflict is perceived primarily from SfC actors' experiences, which this study helped to highlight, their notion of what is micro and macro level change cannot be measured against what scholars believe to be micro and macro change.

Shifts as the Bridge between Conflict Resolution and SfC

Findings from this study helped specify the logical underpinnings (assumptions) of how SfC curricula believe that individuals can create change. Specifically, curricula

are grounded in the assumption that individuals have the capacity to change themselves and thereby their environment. Such an approach to resolving conflict is not new. Shapiro (2006) emphasized that within the conflict resolution literature, much focus is placed on external situational influences such as social learning, cultural narratives and norms, lack of skills, processes or forums for constructively addressing conflicts, and structures and situations that frustrate people's ability to meet their basic needs. This focus is on "external rather than inherent causes of human conflict" and "provides a hopeful view of human capacity for consciously changing themselves and their social environment" (Ibid., 4). This is the same kind of "hopeful" view that SfC actors expressed through sharing their personal and professional experiences related to sport's ability to create positive change. Shapiro further highlights that conflict resolution practitioners predominantly select the individual level where change is sought through strategies that shift attitudes, perceptions, feelings, behaviors, and motivations of participants (Ibid., 5). Findings from this study revealed that the focus on individuals and shifts in perception is the bridge between conflict resolution interveners and SfC actors. The concept of shifts will be discussed at length in the following section as it pertains to what SfC curricula specifically seek to do.

Shifts are primarily viewed as changes in perception that transpire when individuals re-imagine their existing ideas of what is possible. Such re-imagination of one's existing ways of being, feeling, and thinking is believed to expand individuals' boundaries that dictate what is possible in relation to their sense of self, sense of belonging, and connecting with others (relationship building). In this sense, individuals

are believed to be equipped to create positive internal change and act as agents of change in other aspects of life (home, school, career). When it comes to individuals' agency, however, Mitchell (2005) cautions intervention programs in assuming overly grandiose expectations of individual agency as it relates to overcoming structural conflict and creating positive change. He argues that interventions should focus on cultivating "learning environments" in which old patterns can evolve into new ones, with the expectation that new patterns can at most serve to prevent (and not resolve) the perpetuation of conflict (Mitchell 2005, 19). And indeed, a finding in this study revealed that curricula are designed to create such learning environments (safe spaces) with two loci of change that encourage shifts to transpire: spaces between existing reality and re-imagined reality, and spaces within frozen reality. The latter finding, spaces within frozen reality involves 'freezing' the challenges that contribute to a particular conflict using sport and play activities. Participants explore different ways to resolve the challenge as a way to tap into their innate capacity to address conflict. The freezing concept is akin to Lewin's (1974) three-step conception of the process of change in individuals. Lewin argues that the first step involves *unfreezing*, or developing an openness toward something different than the existing condition. Employing strategies that increase motivation is one example of helping to create openness – in SfC curricula sport is the vehicle that "hooks", motivates, and creates a sense of "openness" within individuals to share and explore experiences. Once openness is realized, action is required to generate *movement* to a new level – action can be translated as the physicality and live action of sport. The third and final step in the process of creating change in individuals is

refreezing which involves establishing actions or processes that support a new level of behavior. New processes or standards are developed at this stage in order to ensure that new behaviors "stick" (Marcus 2006, 440). Through observations incorporated into the research design of this study, it was found that sport can act as a culture-creating vehicle that establishes new ways and norms of being different from those of one's existing reality. This observed finding helps to frame sport as having the ability to create a "third-culture" (Broome 1993) which "can only develop through interaction in which participants are willing to open themselves to new meanings, to engage in genuine dialogue, and to constantly respond to the new demands emanating from the situation" (Ramsbotham, Miall, and Woodhouse 2011, 61 quoting Broome 1993, 104). Third-culture is believed to foster relational empathy – which aligns with SfC goals to strengthen one's relationship-building skills – and is "essential for successful conflict resolution" (Ibid.).

A deeper exploration into the loci of change in SfC curricula through observations revealed that shifts are encouraged to transpire by manipulation of biological senses (feeling, touching, hearing, and seeing) using the physicality of sport and play activities. Drills and activities are designed to simulate challenges of conflict and place participants in the position to make discoveries about themselves, their ideas, and their relations with others (peers, adults) – all components that are believed to make up participants' worldviews. The power of manipulating biological senses lies in tapping into another layer of learning through the body that goes beyond what the mind can grasp. This observed finding aligns with Allen's (2011) conception of shifts as "consciousness"

which refer to sensory and emotional perception, memory, volition, aversions, desires, cognition, and especially to awareness within each of these areas and beyond" (240). Allen argues that because conflict engages the cognitive (mind), somatic (body), emotional (heart), and spiritual (soul) experience, it becomes increasingly important to employ the use of a "consciousness lens to view conflict and conflict resolution" in order to understand the "interior processes within people engaged in conflict and conflict resolution" (Ibid., 243). At some level SfC Implementers – those who work directly with program participants – not only understand the mind-body connection but they have figured out ways through sport to heighten biological senses so as to enhance learning derived from the mind.

Such an approach has interesting implications for how conflict resolution interventions can be designed. It implies that intellect-level conversations are only a portion of the equation to shift perceptions, particularly where perceptions (of goal incompatibility) have been defined as a key contributing factor to conflict (Galtung 1958). Incorporating a somatic element that relates directly to the challenges of a conflict and that supplements intellect-level conversations may incite more internalized understanding within and among individuals in a group, or more ambitiously, among conflictants.

Incorporation of the physical element (biological senses) in conflict literature is limited as exemplified in the plethora of frameworks which chiefly explain attitudes and cognitive changes linked to behavioral outcomes (Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009; Jon 2013; Mezirow 1978, 1997; Deardorff 2006). As a specific example, d'Estree, Beck and

Colby (2003) outline three theoretical schools of thought that seek to induce shifts: behavioral, cognitive, and family systems. Each framework emphasizes cognitive shifts in individuals' perceptions of themselves, the other and their relationship, and uses cognitive approaches to induce such shifts. At levels of analyses, the physical element is unexplored as a *vehicle* that elicit shifts (primarily as a result of the limited literature at the theoretical level to which this study seeks to contribute). Instead, the physical element is mostly understood as indicators. For example, Carstarphen (2003) identifies that shifts can be understood through indicators at different levels of analysis: affective, cognitive, non-verbal, and verbal (312). At the *affective* level, indicators are changes in intensity of emotions and in emotions being experienced (i.e. surprise, pain). *Cognitive* level includes indicators such as cognitive dissonance, participants struggling to understand, and the emergence of new thinking and realizations. *Nonverbal* level includes indicators such as silence, reflection, changes in facial expressions that express affective and cognitive processes (i.e. surprise, confusion, crying). Finally, *verbal* level includes statements that reflect affective and cognitive indicators (e.g., statements expressing surprise, pain), and statements of acknowledgement of self and others) (Ibid.).

Findings from interviews and observations with Implementers revealed the belief and use of sport as more than indicators. Through its live action characteristic, sport acts as a vehicle to elicit a range of reactions across affective, cognitive, non-verbal and verbal levels of analysis, such as exercising control or lack thereof over emotions and situations, forming new bonds with others, silence, level of physical engagement, and sharing of personal information. These reactions are believed to indicate "teachable

moments" or rather openings through which participants can explore (or be taught) skills and new ideas that alter their existing realities of what is possible (i.e. new perceptions). So, sport with its 'somatic' element, might serve as an additional level of analysis to current frameworks in conflict literature.

More specifically in regard to shifts, Carstarphen argues that the more sudden and dramatic the indicator of change (or reactions as expressed in this study), the more likely the indicator and shift can be observed (Ibid.). Herein lies the uniqueness of sport because through its physicality and live action, a range of indicators happen rapidly and suddenly – suggesting a higher chance that shifts can be identified. It was observed through observations that Implementers demonstrated certain skills to be able to recognize indicators. They are the ability to be a clear communicator, to multi-task and think quickly, to manage silent moments, and alternate between the role of an Implementer and participant (to increase opportunities for bonding). Such abilities help Implementers to recognize and leverage teachable moments that encourage shifts to transpire. Incorporating the somatic level of analysis, with a specific focus on biological senses, can further build upon Carstaphen's typology. At the same time, it can provide conflict interveners with an appealing vehicle (sport) that is conducive to eliciting rapid and sudden shifts which can be leveraged to address conflict-perpetuating perceptions.

Use of Sport in Dialogue to Shift Perceptions

Designers and Implementers expressed a heavy emphasis on discussion sessions that are designed to make explicit the connection between lessons learned in sport to life contexts. Toward this aim, Implementers pose questions that encourage participants to

explore meanings behind the lessons and skills taught (i.e. to celebrate, to not give up), to discover solutions to challenges that allow conflict to ensue, and that encourage participants to feel open enough to share sensitive information about the conflicts they face. In their framing of questions, Implementers emphasize participants' learning derived from physical expressions in sport and play with learning derived from the mind. So, it is not simply about making explicit the contextual connections between lessons learned, as Designers expressed, but rather about explicitly connecting participants' behaviors (physical expressions during sport) to their thinking (existing perceptions).

Making the behavior-perception connections explicit is an important feature in conflict-based frameworks, such in the Galtung's ABC Triangle. This framework depicts that "[t]he formation of a situation of goal incompatibility (a conflict *situation*) gives rise to adversaries' conflict *behavior* in order to achieve their (apparently incompatible) goals, plus a related set of perceptions and *attitudes* about themselves, the Other(s) and "third" parties affected or affecting the relationship of conflict" (Mitchell 2005, 8). Additionally, Mezirow (1997) discusses shifts as "frames of reference" that are "structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. They selectively shape and delimit expectations, perception, cognition, and feelings. They set our 'line of action'" (5). To this concept, Kiely (2005) adds that in dialogue and situations where individuals are confronted with perspectives/experiences that do not match their frame of reference, they experience a cognitive dissonance. The locus of change happens at the level of intensity of the dissonance. For example, low-intensity encounters can be more easily integrated into existing frames of reference, while high-intensity encounters, which

oftentimes involves emotional reactions, lead to transformational change at the level of questioning/reflecting upon assumptions because they differ so intensely with existing frames of reference.

Findings included in this study demonstrate that sport can be used to simulate elements of conflict; an approach that enables individuals to explore their perceptions and behaviors, and later discuss what took place within the conflict-related context. More specifically, including dialogue before, during, and/or after sport and play activities (as designed in curricula) takes raw and fresh experiences at the somatic level and connects them to learning at the mind level. The timeliness of making such connections adds another element to the level of intensity in any cognitive dissonance experienced by participants during sport. Additionally, given that the physicality and live action of sport elicits a range of reactions across affective, cognitive, non-verbal and verbal levels, there is greater chance for high-intensity encounters that create cognitive dissonance, and through skilled facilitators, lead to questioning/reflecting upon assumptions of existing frames of reference (or existing realities as expressed in this study). In this sense, sport can act as an effective vehicle that fosters shifts in perception and transforms individuals' behavior.

Designing Curricula for Context

Findings showed that communication between Designers and Implementers is highly valued, evidenced by regular and frequent sharing of information about context, participants' needs (or specific incidences), and how well (or not) activities were received. Because Implementers are privy to obtaining first-hand knowledge through

working directly with participants, they are given agency to co-design curricula and adjust lesson plans as necessary when applying them. Essentially, Designers rely on Implementers' "tacit" knowledge to inform and deepen their understanding of conflict and the kinds of changes that are being cultivated through their curricula. Coined by Polyani (1958), tacit knowledge is skills, ideas and experiences which are primarily intuitive and acquired through practical experience versus through formal education and logical deduction. The transfer of tacit knowledge from, for example Implementer to participants, requires extensive personal contact, regular interaction, and trust (Goffin and Koners 2011). Findings from this study demonstrated that SfC curricula emphasize all three as they emphasize personal contact and trust (relationship building between peer to peer, peer-adults) and regular interaction (consistent and long-term programs).

While curricula are revised over time, one approach to designing curricula emerged that involves assessing needs for each cohort of participants and then using the information to design a tailored curriculum for that particular group. This approach counters scholars' critique that SfC programs assume people from disadvantaged communities are uniformly deficient as well as in need of development – assumptions that align with a deficit model (Nols et al. 2017 quoting Coakley, 2011; Coalter 2013). The deficit model implies that the actual deficiencies faced by youth are not based on systemic assessments of needs and social conditions, and that attention is detracted from the broader social and structural contexts, such as poverty, social inequalities that contributed to youths' conflictual situation in the first place (Nols et al. 2017). Although a minority, a few curricula included in this study proved to be the counter to this critique.

Interviewees expressed that through their assessments they are able to retrieve information about what "poverty" or "violence" or "lack of access to quality education" look like for their participants, those who are directly confronted with the conflict. Additionally, they are able to use this information either for designing tailored curricula for each group of participants, revising curricula, or informing their one-on-one interventions. However, across all programs, Implementers are relied on to provide context-specific information that is used to revise curricula (or adjust its focus areas) based on any changing "needs" of the communities in which they work. These are direct efforts to understand context – social and structural – as well as needs from the existing reality of participants. This is a critical step to take in any conflict-based intervention because, as Avruch (1998) asserts, it is inaccurate to assume that basic needs are homogenous, uniformly distributed, single-level, customary, and stable across time.

Programmatically, findings from this study revealed that while Designers and Implementers do embark on reflecting about the content that informs curricula, except that they do so through a single-loop learning process. This means that their "action strategies" (Argyris and Schön 1974) such as sport and play activities, non-sport components, and lesson plans are questioned and adjusted as necessary, whereas their "governing variable" (Ibid.) – the assumption that sport is an effective vehicle – remained intact. SfC actors never once questioned the abilities of sport and play to address conflict and create positive change. In fact, findings showed that SfC actors expressed a "deeper appreciation" for sport over time and used their personal experiences as a key premise (discussed earlier in this Chapter). However, observations in this study revealed that their

firm belief in sport is also informed by a match between their theory-in-use (the world view and values implied by their behavior) and their espoused theory (the world view and values which people believe their behavior is based on).

Where SfC programs fall short is in their effort to clearly articulate the causal pathways of change – essentially, in their development of ToC that clearly identify the how and why layers of an initiative.

How SfC ToC Coincide with Conflict Theory

Among the NGOs included in this study, few had readily available ToC to share, thereby confirming the assertion that ToC are underemployed in the SfC field (Chen 2018, 6). A couple SfC actors shared logic models instead and expressed that they prefer using them because it better articulates what they do. Indeed, this is a strength of logic models; they visually demonstrate the basic inputs, outputs, and outcomes of a program such that one could "see at a glance if outcomes are out of sync with inputs and activities" (Clarke and Anderson 2004). Logic models also provide a "clear statement of the overall intent of an intervention as well as useful guidance for implementation and selection of variables for an evaluation" (Rogers 2008, 34). The preference found through this study to use logic models provides one reason for why researchers' in the SfC field have primarily focused on outcomes and impacts rather than the underlying inputs and processes (Ibid., quoting Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, Smith 2017; Cronin 2011; Lyras and Welty Peachey 2011) and are therefore without well-defined ToC. This point further strengthens the need for an iterative research approach (as incorporated in this study) that explores the logical underpinnings of SfC curricula through interviews of

those who design curricula as well as observations of and post-observation interviews with those who apply them.

Logic models are limited in several ways. For example, Rogers (2008) asserts that the "anxiety provoked by uncertainty and ambiguity can lead managers and evaluators to seek the reassurance of a simple logic model, even when this is not appropriate" (48). Logic models also risk overstating (or neglecting to explain) the causal relationships in an intervention and do not draw on a wide research based theory, particularly as it relates to conflict-based interventions (Ibid., 33). Findings from this study show this to be true; SfC curricula did not explain causation and they were predominantly grounded and shaped by disciplines outside of conflict and peace studies. By broadening their scholarship base in conflict studies, SfC curricula can benefit from selection of a variety of theoretical lenses and methodologies that can build its "limited theory development" (Whitley 2018, 5). Subsequently, developing and using ToC enables SfC actors to reflect on a range of macro theories that underpin theory and action as well as whether different theories should take different priority in different areas of development (James 2011, 5). Such efforts would also directly help SfC actors to identify the most efficacious and causal pathways to promote certain outcomes and impacts.

Through interview and observation data (tacit knowledge), it was found that those who were able to provide ToC were also able to identify the scholarship that underpinned their curricula. This finding suggests that an interplay between scholarship and what one believes can happen may help Designers to explain causation with clearer articulation. Additionally, it was found that the central processes or drivers by which change (i.e.

shifts, loci of change described in detail in Chapter Four) is believed to come about for individuals fall into two categories:

- teaching skills that are believed to enable individuals to lead and support social and structural policies that create equitable access to resources and opportunities;
- helping individuals tap into their innate capacity to work within social and structural systems so as to create equitable access to resources and opportunities.

Essentially, if sport is used as a vehicle to foster positive changes within and among individual changes, then the groundwork for supporting positive change at social and structural levels has been established. Such a ToC connects with conflict and peace theory, Inside-Out Peacebuilding which states that when individuals (and/or enough individuals) experience inner transformation, "they can influence societal patterns, identity groups, institutional performance, and other key actors toward constructive conflict engagement" (Nan 2010, 15). Its ToC is that "if key actors and/or enough individuals undergo constructive shifts in their consciousness, such as developing more universal identities or awareness of identity formation, then their commitment and capacity for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and for resisting mobilization of conflictual identities, will increase and can influence social change in that area" (Nan 2010, 72). Specifically, "Shifts in Consciousness" fall within the Inside-Out Peacebuilding Theory and argues that transformations in individuals' consciousness (or shift as expressed in this study) through reflection, cognitive dissonance, and other

experiences can lead them to develop new ways of thinking about ways to cultivate peace; the premise being that large quantities of transformed individuals will lead to social change (Nan 2011). Given the connection to their assumptions and efforts, exploring indicators of this conflict theory (Nan 2010) would help SfC actors to dissect how "internal awareness of biases, attitudes, motivations" may lead to "agency (behavior), feelings of empowerment, awareness of choices, commitment, ability to engage constructively, respect, choices, and find avenues" (Ibid., 3). Such exploration would not only inform SfC actors and thereby their curricula about ways they can capture positive change with respect to addressing conflict, but it can also foster reflective practices at the level of assumptions among Designers and Implementers. Additionally, the process of developing indicators provides a specific framework that can encourage Designers to articulate what change means at the level of assumptions, how change happens, and at what level(s) change takes place.

Indicators, as well as shifts, are further linked to ToC, the identification of how and why an initiative works along the pathway of micro to macro level change; this is a specific area in which SfC actors need to step up to the plate.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This research study explored how and why sport is used to address conflict and create positive change. Specifically, the following research questions guided the choice of methodology and study design: How does sport address conflict? Why is sport used as a vehicle for positive change and how does sport facilitate such change? What kinds of knowledge inform the construction of SfC curricula? What are the ways in which SfC actors reflect upon their work? Exploring these questions helps two end users who intervene in conflict: SfC actors and conflict resolution practitioners. First, this research directly addressed the need for increased theoretical understanding in the SfC field (Chen 2018, Whitley et al. 2015; Coalter 2015, 2013; Ricigliano 2012). Specifically, SfC programs claim that micro level changes (i.e. individual level) will lead to macro level changes (Coakley 2011; Coalter 2013); claims which have yet to be proven and have been criticized as grandiose (Coakley 2010; Whitley, Blom, and Gerstein 2015 quoting Anderson and Olsen, 2003; Reflections of Peace Practice 2009a, 2009b, 2011). This research study took a different approach from the more commonly used monitoring and evaluation lens that examines the accuracy of the claims. Instead, this study sought to better understand why such micro-to-macro level claims continue to be made by SfC actors. The approach, therefore, lent itself toward exploring conceptualizations of sport,

of conflict and change, and of the kinds of knowledge, communications, and assumptions used by Designers and Implementers who leverage sport to address conflict and create positive change.

The study further contributes to the field of conflict resolution by building upon its multi-disciplinary nature and expanding the existing pool of innovative intervention tools with which to respond to conflict. The research enables the field to gain insights into the various perceptions of conflict in use and thereby create an opportunity for reflection, enhancements, and collaborations across disciplines. For the conflict resolution practitioner, the research provides for a richer understanding into ways in which conflict interveners' can be attuned to (and facilitate) shifts in perceptions of individuals in conflict situations, thereby capitalizing on opportunities to cultivate positive change in practice.

Toward this aim, the study utilized a methodology that allowed for three layers of exploration. First, interviews were conducted with 'Designers' (i.e. program directors, managers) who create SfC curricula at NGOs which have programs operating in the United States. From the data obtained during these interviews, four NGO programs were selected for observation in order to gain more insight into what happens on the ground with participants in SfC programs. These four programs were selected based on showing the most difference from among those included in the sample of this study in terms of their thinking and approach to use sport to address conflict and create positive change. After each observation, the researcher conducted a post-observation interview with the 'Implementer' (i.e. coach, facilitator) who conducted the session.

Concluding Remarks

As a result of findings which emerged from this study, several important assertions can be made for the two end users of this study, SfC actors and conflict resolution practitioners. To begin with, one's experiences cannot be separated from one's conceptualization of conflict. These experiences, when they have stemmed from somatic means become more ingrained in one's being, meaning that they shape the lens through which conflict – its challenges as well as solutions – are viewed. Indeed, there exists a strong correlation between the body and the mind (Soth 2006; Athanasiadou and Halewood 2011). For example, the individual who was tortured and raped during wartime, or who felt starvation in a war-torn society, or who felt a release of power through operating a gun are those who understand violence on a different level than what the mind alone can grasp. Experiences gained through engaging one's biological senses are profoundly influential to informing individuals' worldviews and their responses to conflict (the more senses engaged, the greater the influence). Along with learning invoked at the mind level, somatically-induced experiences are what constitute the 'whole story' of one's reality. Such findings may contribute to enhancing traditional conflict interventions that are designed primarily to stimulate the intellect through, for example, dialogue sessions. This kind of approach engages only half of one's story and could certainly be improved upon, as unearthed through this research study.

For SfC actors included in this study, sensitization of biological senses through the physicality and live action of sport are used to foster positive shifts in development (i.e. characteristics, skills, perceptions) at the micro level (individual). SfC actors credit

such shifts to equipping them with the necessary skills to create macro-level change, conceptualized in terms of their professional aspirations and successes, increased access to opportunities in education, relationships, and community building – essentially, macro-level change beyond the level of self.

This study into SfC programs has unearthed details (i.e. assumptions, loci of change, shifts) and key characteristics of sport that may enhance interventions starting at the individual level. Specifically, sport and play based training and activities are designed to manipulate one's biological senses so as to enable individuals to exercise agentic skills (i.e. taking control of one's emotions and environment), perceptions (of self and others), and behaviors within simulated conflict settings. What transpires in such a space is a third-culture – new ways of being and thinking – that transcend the boundaries of one's existing realities and conflict situation. Here is a safe space – a re-imagined world aside from the existing world – that can be safe and educational and allows for a deeper level of internalization of what is taught to and learned within and among individuals.

What interveners must do in these kinds of interventions is to be equipped and ready to identify and recognize reactions – 'openings' – most apt to foster shifts in one's existing reality toward a new reality. Interventions that incorporate physicality and live action are those which can, as derived in this study, elicit high intensity, recognizable openings that shift perceptions. Important to the success of fostering shifts is the timeliness of when interveners encourage individuals to explore and connect thoughts (existing perceptions) with behaviors, ideally immediately after somatic experiences in

order to leverage the ripeness of learning from the body to learning at the mind level (and vice versa).

While Designers can design the best possible intervention programs toward this aim they are not in the most ideal position (by virtue of being away from having direct and on-going interactions with participants) to fully understand the concepts they seek to achieve; concepts such as safe spaces, shifts, and teachable moments. Aside from Designers' reliance on Implementers' ability to reflect on their teaching and the shared insights gained through communication channels in an organization, the role of Designers as it currently stands requires much more flexibility with which to respond to participants and opportunities. Implementers are, therefore, a foundational piece to interventions as they are the ones who can best understand context, culture, and basic human needs across a range of individuals who possess their own unique 'whole stories'. Herein lies one potential contribution of this study that may address the persistent tension between theory and practice: use of physicality and live action to cultivate an interplay between the theorizing as well as the practice of those who chiefly design and those who chiefly apply knowledge in conflict-based interventions.

Interventions focused on the 'mind-body' package through sport can enable interveners to help individuals become more mindful of aligning their perceptions and behaviors toward positive change (of self and with others), thereby increasing the chance that what one believes is doing (espoused theory) matches what one actually does (theory-in-use). Herein lies the power of sport – in its perceived ability to merge disconnects between the mind (perceptions) and body (behaviors) so as to engage the

whole person and the whole story to move toward positive change. Essentially, this is the logic through which SfC programs seek to create agents of change who are capable of going from micro to macro level change.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

A limitation of this study is its small sample size which impedes its ability to make broad scale generalizations about how and why sport is used as a vehicle to address conflict and create positive change. However, the hope is that through the approach of unearthing and articulating underpinnings which ground current SfC efforts, specifically in the Global North, conflict interveners will find use for and be encouraged to incorporate such knowledge into how they design, apply, research, and assess existing and future SfC interventions.

Findings from this study, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five, led to several key recommendations for future research and practice in conflict-based interventions:

1. *Bridge conversations happening at theoretical and practice levels*: opportunities between scholars and practitioners in the SfC field should be created to discuss and reach consensus on what terms such as 'conflict' and 'change' entail so that future claims and critiques are made using baseline understandings grounded in a clarity of assumptions. Such discussions should include the personal experiences of SfC actors who design and apply curricula given that findings in this study have demonstrated a strong connection between personal experiences with how and what sport is believed to do.
2. *Engage the conflict and peace literature*:

a. opportunities for workshops and training for SfC practitioner should be created to expand the SfC field's currently limited (and oftentimes randomly selected) pool of conflict and peace theories, concepts, and frameworks. This can inform and enhance SfC curricula in not only the kinds of skills taught (i.e. conflict resolution skills) but how they relate to specific structural factors which are relevant to the broader context of the communities in which programs operate.

b. explore conflict and peace theories that emphasize the concept of shifts, most especially in relation to development of indicators. This approach will help SfC actors to better articulate causal pathways of change, and to identify and tangibly capture kinds of change that transpire as well as how each kind of change relates to another. Such an approach can help SfC actors develop ToC in a comprehensive, theoretically grounded manner that can enhance (and focus) monitoring and evaluation efforts.

3. *Explore the role of third-culture*: future research should take a deeper, perhaps longitudinal, exploration into sport's third-culture creating abilities. Such research can help to unpack the ways in which and the extent to which third-culture through sport can foster a sense of openness, motivation, and establish new ways and norms of being, feeling, and thinking different from those of one's existing reality. Such research would carve out yet another approach in monitoring and evaluation of SfC programs.

4. *Explore the somatic element*: future research should explore the ways in which conflict intervention efforts can incorporate a 'mind-body' approach using physicality, live action, and manipulation of biological senses to foster shifts in perceptions within and among individuals, particularly as they relate to altering one's existing realities (ways of being, thinking, feeling).
5. *Encourage needs assessment as standard practice*: encourage the adoption of needs assessment as a standard practice before designing SfC curricula, most especially for each incoming group of participants. This approach will yield and support existing means that gather information about social and systemic factors as well as specific ways (from participants' perspectives) in which these factors prevent fulfilment of basic human needs. As a standard practice, the approach will also help ensure consistent and timely information about conflict and its challenges faced by participants.
6. *Examine influence of funders and stakeholders*: explore the ways in which funders and stakeholders' pressures (if any) to see proof that sport 'works' plays into SfC actors' choice to develop and use logic models instead of ToC.
7. *Expand the role of Designers*: the role of Designers as it currently stands requires much more flexibility with which to respond to participants and opportunities. While Designers' rely on Implementers' knowledge obtained from the frontlines (i.e. contextual information, tacit knowledge) to co-design curricula, Designers should themselves conduct regular, consistent observations of SfC programs as well as co-apply curricula alongside Implementers. Such an approach would more

directly strengthen Designers' implementation understanding, enhance discussion in staff discussions (since both Designers and Implementers have seen programs in action), and reduce any limitations or gaps in communication and information-sharing between Designers and Implementers.

a. *Participate in role-switching to diversify perspectives*: expanding SfC actors' role through their participation in both the design and implementation of curricula can encourage individual and collective reflections on the level of assumptions (i.e. in organization-wide or staff discussions). By taking Designers and Implementers outside of their role-specific tasks, there is a strong potential for them to gain different perspectives of what takes place in SfC programs, and thereby encourage each to compare, contrast, question, and discuss what they see, feel, and think. In essence, by participating in each other's roles, Designers and Implementers can help one another to explore more deeply and critically the assumptions that result from their role-specific worldviews.

b. *Focus on assumptions to encourage double-loop reflection and ToC development*: reflecting on the level of assumptions will place SfC actors in the position to identify the kinds of assumptions which are made, and how each connects to or leads to another assumption in the over-all causal pathway of a program toward addressing conflict and positive change. Taking such a reflective role will help Designers and Implementers to develop a more coherent distinction between logic models and ToC;

meaning that SfC actors will gain a deeper level of understanding and articulation of how outcomes at different levels of a program are believed to be achieved, beyond the more simplified representation of logic models which are prominently utilized in the SfC field.

Derived through conducting interviews and observations, findings in this research study will deepen the understanding of why sport is believed to be such a powerful vehicle, and equally important, how it is used to do good in society. As one Designer stated in reference to her SfC program, "this isn't a campaign, it's a true program with a lot of intention behind it and I think not just myself but a lot of the team members here we're very high on ensuring that the program is actually impactful."

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BIOGRAPHY

Soolmaz Abooali is a published author, lecturer, and world champion in Traditional Karate who has programming and athlete envoy experiences at the intersection of sport and conflict at both domestic and international levels. For more information, visit www.soolmazabooali.com to learn about her work to date.