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Equal Abilities – The Swedish Parasport Federation and the Inclusion Process

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Abstract

A major organizational change is currently taking place in Swedish sports, with people labelled with disabilities leaving the Swedish Parasport Federation (SPF) to participate in mainstream sports under the Swedish Sports Confederation. The aim of this study was to map the expectations of this ongoing process of the stakeholders of the SPF. Based on a questionnaire with 130 respondents connected to the SPF we found that, overall, the respondents were optimistic about mixed training groups, something that could point towards the possibility of equality between PLwD (people labelled with disabilities) and mainstream athletes. However, a rather large number of respondents feared negative consequences in terms of the physical environment for PLwD. This means that inclusion may create a dilemma regarding the relationship between the individual and the environment. We conclude that inclusion works at different levels of organized sport and there is insufficient knowledge about the impact of inclusion.

Keywords: activity, parasport, athletes, sports organization.

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With approximately 3 million members of nearly 20,000 non-profit local sports clubs, the Swedish Sports Confederation (SSC) is the country's largest popular movement (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2019). Considerably smaller is the Swedish Parasport Federation (SPF), which administers 15 sporting activities for people with physical and intellectual disabilities and visual impairments. The SPF is also the National Paralympic Committee and the accredited national programme for the Special Olympics. The Swedish Deaf Sports Federation administers sports for the deaf and is not a part of the SPF. At present, there is an ongoing organizational change in Sweden with the intention that people labelled with disabilities (PLwD[1]) should leave the SPF for mainstream sports under the SSC. The decision behind this movement goes back to the biennial general meeting in May 2017 at which the SSC and the SPF decided that the current Strategy 2025 (Svenska Parasportförbundet, 2020; Wickman, 2017) should develop according to five pathways. One of these was "inclusive sports for all", which committed to equality and diversity in all activities and the promotion of inclusive processes, practices, and culture in line with the principles set out in the SSC's programme manifesto, "What Sports Wants" (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2019). This was the start of the now ongoing inclusion process, with PLwD leaving the SPF for mainstream sports.

In this context, based on the definition by Riksidrottsförbundet (2016), inclusion means that everyone should be able to participate in sport and physical activity in a welcoming and inclusive way, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ability, cultural background, ethnicity, location, or life stage. One of the key principles of the organizational change towards the inclusion of PLwD in mainstream sports is that, according to

1 For an individual to gain access to parasports and the Paralympics, a label is required. However, the label "disabled" can mean different things in different contexts, and a person may experience disability in one context but not in another. By using the term PLwD, we clarify the meaning of this label in a sporting context. However, when data was collected the term Para-Athlete (PA) was used and therefore we use PA when referring to the empirical part of this study (aim, data and results).

Strategy 2025 (Svenska Parasportförbundet, 2020), PLwD should, from a broader inclusion perspective, have equal opportunities to undertake different sports at all levels (from recreational to elite) and should be afforded similar opportunities as those enjoyed by mainstream athletes (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2019). In practice, this means that national sports organizations (NSO) are encouraged to play a more significant role in expanding their programmes and services to include PLwD.

Sports organizations and inclusion

Since the end of the 1990s, sports systems in several countries have evolved due to the increased recognition of diversity in society. Studies carried out in, for example, Canada (Allard & Bornemann, 1999), England (Thomas & Smith, 2008), and Norway (Sørensen & Kahrs, 2006), showed how national mainstream sporting organizations had widened the scope of their responsibilities and actions concerning the inclusion of PLwD. These changes implied the transfer of responsibility from parasport organizations (that historically regulated sporting activities for PLwD) to NSO. This is evidenced by changes in the policies of sports governing organizations that increasingly adopt responsibility for enhancing sports opportunities for PLwD (Misener & Wasser, 2016). In a follow-up study on the inclusion process of PLwD into the Norwegian Sports Confederation, Sørensen and Kahrs (2006) argue that there were notions and expectations among policymakers and stakeholders in key positions in sports organizations that PLwD should be absorbed into existing structures and practices. This led to an organizational focus on individuals with particular types of disabilities who could most easily be included in the current system, such that only the "best" para-athletes "survive" in mainstream sports. Furthermore, it was believed that those with a greater need for support and resources would not be able to adopt the practices of mainstream sports and were offered fewer opportunities to participate.

There are contradictory findings about the implications of inclusive environments. Some studies show great benefits (diversity enriches), while others show that children benefit from homogeneous groups (Ruijs & Peetsma, 2009). There is insufficient knowledge in the scientific literature on the concept of inclusion and its impact at different levels of organized sport (Geidne & Jerlinder, 2016). This lack of knowledge is

troublesome, especially as we now see the number of PLwD increasing in mainstream sports. As scant academic attention has been paid to similar previous changes in this field, there is uncertainty regarding how well the process towards inclusion works.

While many benefits of physical activity have been documented (for example, on health and social well-being), barriers still exist for PLwD, which limits opportunities for participation. Studies have identified barriers to participation in organized sport. For example, not all sports clubs accept PLwD, leaders lack adequate education in parasports and how to adapt mainstream sports for PA, and there may be poor opportunities and access to information about appropriate programmes for adapted training and competition (DePauw & Gavron, 2005; Geidne & Jerlinder, 2016; Sørensen & Kars, 2011). Inaccessible facilities are another typical barrier to PLwD participation in sports (DePauw & Gavron, 2005). Finally, barriers can also exist due to financial reasons (Shields et al., 2012) or caregivers' fears that their children could be injured or socially excluded.

Research has identified lower participation rates in parasports (Darcy et al., 2020) compared with mainstream sports. One explanation is that ability is still at the centre of sport (Darcy et al., 2011; DePauw & Gavron, 2005), making the concept of disability and sport a contradiction for many. Even at the elite Paralympic level, disability sport is perceived by many as inferior to non-disabled sport (Darcy et al., 2017; DePauw & Gavron, 2005). An illustrative example is the sprinter Oscar Pistorius who, as a double below-the-knee amputee, competed against able-bodied athletes at the 2012 Olympics. This led to discussions about the advantages of his prosthetics, with the argument that prosthetics "should be considered as clear technical aids" (Smith, 2015). Despite barriers and lower participation rates in sports among PLwD, sports clubs constitute an important environment for physical activity (World Health Organization, 2011) and should contribute to achieving health equity by promoting inclusion and integration. Documents and guidelines in Sweden and in many other countries emphasize that sports should be accessible to everyone according to their individual ability (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2016, 2019). Sports clubs should offer health-promotion settings (cf. Geidne et al., 2013; Kokko et al., 2014, 2016) and ensure access for all.

Until recently, dedicated programmes for PLwD in Sweden have mainly been administrated by the SPF. Criticisms of dedicated

programmes include that they can be resource intensive and may not offer opportunities for the exchange of knowledge between athletes with different sporting experiences and optimal support. Inclusive organized sport is argued to have the advantage of encouraging young people to develop socialization skills and close friendships with counterparts of all abilities, ultimately increasing quality of life and well-being. The challenge is that successful inclusion in organized sport is not easily achieved. This has been found particularly among children, since it often requires significant emotional and practical support from caregivers and professionals to help children labelled with disabilities experience a sense of belonging to, connection with, and acceptance by the sports community. Fulfilling the objectives of an integrated and inclusive sports organization is not without challenges (Sørensen & Kahrs, 2006), particularly when it comes to PLwD who need extra support and adjustments.

Aims of the study

The first aim of this study was to analyze what parasport athletes (PA) and stakeholders expect from the SPF at the beginning of the process of organizational change, as the responsibility for programming moves from the SPF to the NSO. The second aim was to investigate any differences in the expectations of PA and stakeholders engaged in organized sport (including employees at the federation, representatives of sports committees, district representatives, and sports club administrators and trainers).

There were four research questions. In the context of the organizational change:

1. Do stakeholders think it is reasonable that PA and athletes without classified disabilities (mainstream athletes) could interact in a training situation and act as role models for one another?
2. Do stakeholders believe that participation rates in sports will change for PA?
3. Will physical accessibility to facilities change for PA?
4. Will financial conditions change for parasports in general and PA in particular?

Data and methodology

Survey and respondents

The online questionnaire was constructed, and the data was collected by SPF. The researchers had the opportunity to include some questions in the questionnaire. The online questionnaire was circulated and administrated by SPF in the summer of 2018. To our knowledge, there were no existing validated questionnaires for us to use that suited the research questions and our target groups, particularly not PA. Before the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents, a reference group at the SPF responded to the questions. From their responses, we reformulated some questions and response alternatives to improve both the validity and reliability of the results.

The questionnaire was addressed to all stakeholders of SPF, including elected representatives, employees of SPF, representatives of sports committees, district representatives, sports club administrators, and PA. We received replies from 130 respondents, which amounted to a response rate of around 30%.[2] Among them, 73% were men, 42% were PA, and 58% were from other stakeholder groups. The attrition was considerable, but there were no indications that it would be systematic. In the questionnaire, the term "mainstream athletes" was used to describe athletes who were not labelled as having a disability.

Variables

We used 15 variables. Most of them addressed expectations of the ongoing organizational change. Examples of the statements include "I think/argue that inclusion will lead to more girls/women starting sports" and "I think/argue that inclusion will lead to a shortage of accessible facilities". Each statement was connected to a response scale ranging from *do not agree at all* (value 1) to *completely agree* (value 5). The questions are displayed in the results (see Tables 1–4).

For each statement, we estimated the mean score. A mean score of 1 indicated that the respondent disagreed with the statement, while a mean score of 5 indicated complete agreement. As it was important

2 Some of the stakeholders had several positions within the organization. As their email addresses appeared several times in the email list, they were asked to respond to the questionnaire only once. The exact number of such cases is unclear, making the exact size of attrition uncertain.

to this study to identify how PA scores compared to those of other stakeholder groups, we compared differences in mean scores using independent samples t-tests. For the usefulness of such tests when comparing differences between populations, see, for instance, Djurfeldt et al. (2010). In cases where p-values were equal to or below 0.05, score differences were statistically significant. Each of the tables in the results section displays a 95% confidence interval, which shows how near any mean difference was to the true mean difference in the population (95% probability).

The variables were grouped into four categories, each of which measured the same theoretical phenomenon corresponding to the four research questions. All variables within each category were merged into an index variable. The first corresponded with *whether PA and mainstream athletes could interact in a training situation and act as role models for one another (*see Figure 1*)*. The second corresponded with *how the organizational change could affect PA participation in sports (*see Figure 2*)*. The third corresponded with *physical accessibility to sports (*see Figure 3*),* and the fourth corresponded with *financial preconditions (*see Figure 4*)*. These indices help to interpret the outcomes of the responses and illustrate the spread of the scorings along the scale. Merging variables into an index variable is suitable only if the variables have a high level of correlation. This was tested using Cronbach's alpha test. The higher the value (ranging from 0 to 1), the higher the correlation. The value of Cronbach's alpha should exceed 0.7 for it to be appropriate to merge variables into an index. This was the case for all the index variables in this study.

In addition to the variables in the questionnaire, the respondents were provided with the space to write a response to the open-ended questions. Such responses would be helpful in deepening the understanding of the respondents' scoring. Most respondents did not use this response opportunity, but the few responses received (related to economic challenges) are mentioned in the results.

Results

The main goal of this study was to identify expectations among PA and stakeholders of how the organizational change would increase or limit opportunities for participation in mainstream sports among PA.

We also investigated whether expectations varied between PA and other stakeholder groups.

The interaction between PA and mainstream athletes in sporting performance

To investigate the respondents' expectations regarding the exchange between PA and mainstream athletes, we used three statements. The first statement referred to the extent to which PA should be able to perform sports with mainstream athletes. The second statement referred to whether mainstream athletes could act as role models for PA, and the third statement asked the opposite – if PA could act as role models for mainstream athletes. Table 1 shows how the respondents scored on each statement. All three statements generated high scores (ranging from 4.1 to 4.3), indicating that the respondents thought that PA and mainstream athletes could act as role models for one another. There was also no significant discrepancy between the scores of PA and other stakeholder groups (Table 1).

TABLE 1 *How respondents found it reasonable for PA and mainstream athletes to be able to interact in a training situation and act as role models for one another.*

	PA (n=54)	*Other stakeholder groups (n=76)*	*95% CI*		
Statements	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	*LL*	*UL*	*P*
I think/argue that:					
PA should be able to perform sports with mainstream athletes.	4.2	4.2	-0.36	0.39	.94
Mainstream athletes act as role models for PA in a training group.	4.3	4.2	-0.45	0.24	.55
PA act as role models for mainstream athletes in a training group.	4.3	4.1	-0.48	0.14	.28

Note: Scale 1 (no agreement) to 5 (complete agreement). ($\bar{x}$) = mean values; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; P = p-value; CI = confidence interval.

Each of the statements in Table 1 strongly correlates, and together they indicate that the respondents agreed that athletes should be able to perform sport together in a training situation. Therefore, we merged the three statements into an index variable (Figure 1), according to which the value 1 on the variable indicates the weakest possible agreement and 5 the strongest possible agreement. The distribution of scores of the index

variable shows that more than 70% of the respondents scored at least 4. Most respondents agreed that PA and mainstream athletes should generally be able to interact with each other in a training situation. The questionnaire did not contain explicit questions regarding attitudes towards the inclusion of PA in mainstream sports. However, the index variable presented here can indirectly, at least partly, function as an indicator of the respondents' perceptions of inclusion, which was highly appreciated by them.

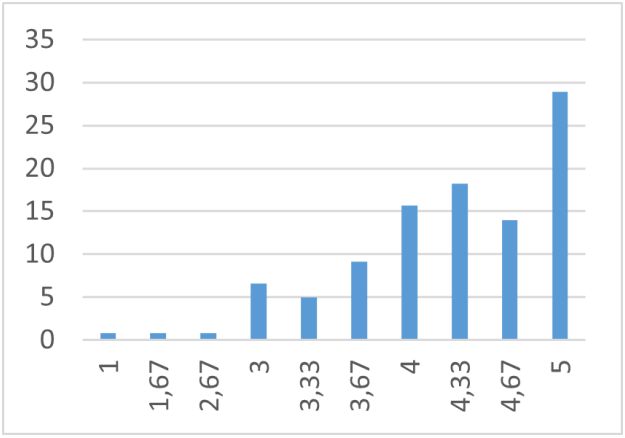

FIGURE 1 *Athletes' interaction in sports performance.*

Note: Scores on the index variable are based on the statements: On the whole, I think that "PA should be able to perform sports with mainstream athletes", "mainstream sports athletes can act as role models for PA in a training group", and "PA can act as role models for mainstream athletes in a training group". Scores ranged from 1 (no agreement) to 5 (complete agreement). The values on the y-axis are percentages.

Expectations concerning PA participation in sports after the organizational change

The second research question concerned whether the respondents expected that the participation of PA in sport would increase after the organizational change. An increased participation rate requires that sports clubs retain current PA and recruit new PA. We used four variables from the questionnaire to answer this question. The wording of these response alternatives and how the respondents scored on each of them are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2 *Respondents' views on an increase in retaining/recruiting PA after the organizational change.*

	PA (n=54)	*Other stakeholder groups (n=76)*	*95% CI*		
Statements	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	*LL*	*UL*	*P*
I think/argue that the organiza–tional change will lead to more:					
female (girls/women) PA starting sports	2.8	3.1	−0.32	0.94	.33
male (boys/men) PA starting sports	2.9	3.3	−0.24	1.02	.22
female (girls/women) PA continuing with sports	2.8	3.4	−0.07	1.17	.08
male (boys/men) PA continuing with sports	3.0	3.5	−0.14	1.10	.13

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (no agreement) to 5 (complete agreement). ($\bar{x}$) = mean values; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; P = p-value; CI = confidence interval.

Overall, the scores of the variables varied between 2.9 and 3.5. This indicates that the respondents partly believed that both the maintenance and recruitment of PA into sports clubs would increase after the organizational change. This is particularly true in relation to male PA. However, there was a discrepancy (at a 10% significance level) in the way PA and other stakeholder groups believed that female PA would continue with sports after the organizational change. PA were slightly less optimistic than other stakeholders.

The index variable (see Figure 2) indicates that the respondents were rather positive in the sense that they thought more PA would participate in sporting activities after the organizational change. Most respondents scored between 3 and 5, and more than 40% largely agreed that participation in sports would increase.

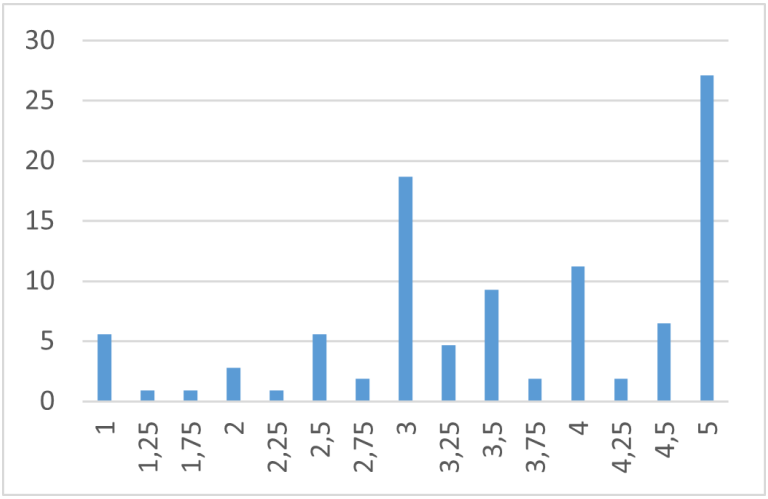

FIGURE 2 *Participation in sports will increase after the organizational change among PA.*

Note: Scores on the index variable "participation in sports will increase after the organizational change among PA" are based on the statements: I think/argue that the organizational change will lead to more: "female PA starting sports", "male PA starting sports", "female PA continuing with sports", and "male PA continuing with sports". Scores ranged from 1 (no agreement) to 5 (complete agreement). The values on the y-axis are percentages.

Physical access to sports for PA after the organizational change

The third research question related to the physical availability of sports to PA, which the organizational change is supposed to ease. We used two variables that concerned accessibility to facilities and special equipment for PA. Table 3 shows the mean value per statement. Overall, the respondents tended to score relatively low on the statements (ranging from 2.1 to 2.8). The scores indicate that, on average, the respondents were not overly concerned about future shortages of facilities and equipment. Table 3 shows a discrepancy between how PA and other stakeholder groups viewed the risk of a shortage of accessible facilities after the organizational change. PA scored significantly lower than other stakeholder groups on this statement, suggesting that PA, on average, were less worried about a shortage.

TABLE 3 *Respondents' views regarding access to facilities and equipment after the organizational change.*

	PA (n=37)	*Other stakeholder groups (n=57)*	*95% CI*		
Statements	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	*LL*	*UL*	*P*
I think/argue that inclusion will lead to a shortage of:					
Access to facilities	2.1	2.8	0.08	1.22	.03
Access to special equipment for PA	2.3	2.6	−0.21	0.94	.21

Note: Score 1 (no agreement) to 5 (complete agreement). ($\bar{x}$) = mean values; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; P = p-value; CI = confidence interval.

The average scoring on each of the variables in Table 3 does not disclose that this issue was a watershed among the respondents because their expectations largely differed regarding overall physical accessibility to sports after the organizational change (Figure 3). The index variable shows that 25% of the respondents did not fear a worsened situation for PA (scores 1 to 2) after the organizational change, while around 35% of the respondents thought that this would lead to a shortage of physical access to sports (scores 4 to 5).

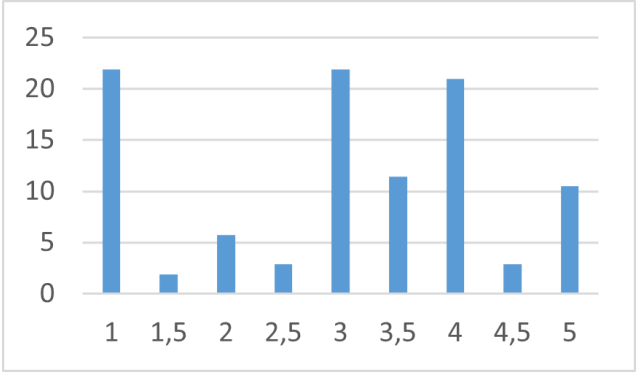

FIGURE 3 *Expected shortage of physical access to sports among PA after the organizational change.*

Note: Scores on the index variable are based on the statements: I think/argue that inclusion will lead to a shortage of "access to facilities" and "access to special equipment for PA". Scores ranged from 1 (no agreement) to 5 (complete agreement). The values on the y-axis are percentages.

Financial preconditions for PA and local sports clubs after the organizational change

The fourth research question addressed how the respondents viewed the financial preconditions for PA and local sports clubs after the organizational change. This was examined using two variables, one of which related to the financial situation of PA and the other to the financial preconditions for sports clubs. Table 4 shows the outcome of each variable. The respondents' scoring ranged from 2.1 to 2.5.

TABLE 4 *Expectations regarding worsened financial preconditions for PA and local sports clubs after the organizational change.*

	PA (n=54)	*Other stakeholder groups (n=76)*	*95% CI*		
Statements	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	*LL*	*UL*	*P*
I think/argue that the organizational change will lead to worse financial preconditions for:					
PA	2.3	2.5	−0.46	0.72	.67
Local sports clubs	2.1	2.4	−0.26	0.91	.28

Note: Score 1 (no agreement) to 5 (complete agreement). ($\bar{x}$) = mean values; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; P = p-value; CI = confidence interval.

As shown in Table 4, the means varied from 2.1 to 2.5. On average, the respondents did not think that the organizational change would worsen the financial situation for PA or sports clubs, and there was no statistical difference between PA's and other stakeholders' scores. However, the index variable indicates that the financial preconditions were a major concern for many. More than 40% of the respondents had a high score on the index variable, illustrating that they feared that the financial preconditions for PA and local sports clubs would worsen after the organizational change.

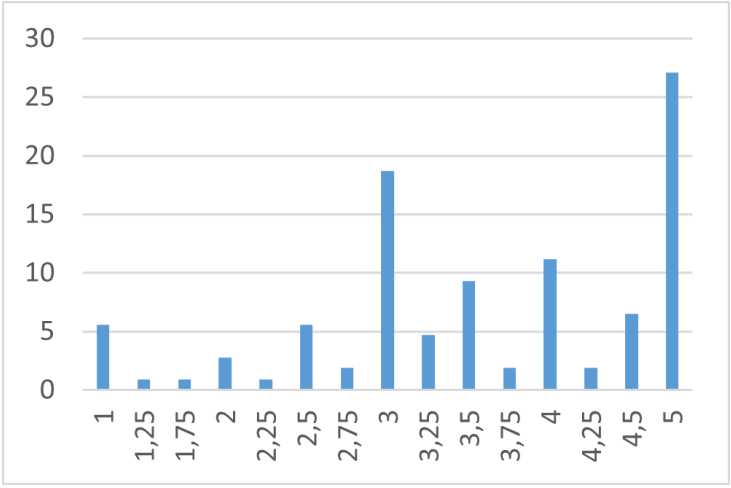

FIGURE 4 *Expectations regarding worsened financial preconditions for PA and local sports clubs after organizational change.*

Note: Scores on the index variable are based on the statements: I think/argue that the organizational change will lead to worse financial preconditions for "PA" and "local sports clubs". Scores ranged from 1 (no agreement) to 5 (complete agreement). The values on the y-axis are percentages.

Several respondents commented on financial preconditions after the organizational change, mainly expressing themselves in terms of anxieties. For instance, some worried that local sports clubs would include PA for financial reasons (that they would get financial support when including a PA in the club), but in bad times, PA would not be prioritized in a similar way to mainstream athletes. Other respondents argued that local sports clubs would not be able to include athletes with severe disabilities because it would be too expensive and probably too difficult for coaches and trainers to give them individual support and to adapt the social and physical environment.

Discussion

This study sought to understand if the organizational change towards inclusion of para-athletes in mainstream sports organizations would result in improved equality in the Swedish Sports Confederation (SSC) according to para-athletes (PA) and stakeholders in the national sports organizations (NSO). The results indicate that the respondents found inclusion to be a useful concept, allowing PA and mainstream athletes

to perform sports together and act as role models for each other. Many, particularly various stakeholders, were optimistic about the future recruitment of PA into sporting activities. The economics of inclusion is the area of most concern for the respondents. Regarding facilities, there was a less clear pattern of responses. Some were concerned about a lack of accessible facilities and equipment, while others were not. Stakeholders appeared to be slightly more worried about resources than PA. However, it seems that expectations regarding the physical environment and the risk of a shortage of specialized equipment constitute a divide among the respondents because many shared significant concerns while others expressed none. This may reflect the respondents' levels of engagement and previous experience in (para)sports. While some respondents had no need for accessible facilities or equipment, it is crucial for the participation of others. These areas of inclusion have an individual and environmental character. Both clearly need to be investigated further, not least because previous research demonstrates the complexity of inclusion and shows that the outcomes are contradictory (Ruijs & Peetsma, 2009).

At an individual level, inclusion can lead to enrichment (Ruijs & Peetsma, 2009), but there are also examples of when inclusion may not be the best option. For instance, children with special needs may benefit from homogenous groups (Ruijs & Peetsma, 2009). In this study, the respondents were optimistic about mixed training groups, something that could point towards the possibility of equality between people labelled with disabilities (PLwD) and mainstream athletes. Like Ruijs & Peetsma (2009), who highlight the complexity of this matter, we wonder what the consequences could be if PLwD are included in an already permanent structure. This could mean a risk that athletes labelled as "deviant" or "in the minority" are assumed to be included in the sports environment that represents "the norm" and "the majority".

Turning to environmental barriers, the respondents in this study feared the negative consequences of inclusion in terms of an ill-equipped physical environment and a lack of financial support for PLwD. Previous research has acknowledged similar areas as problematic. For instance, some local sports clubs do not accept PLwD, leaders lack adequate education in parasports, and there may be inadequate opportunities and access to information about appropriate programmes for adapted training and competition (DePauw & Gavron, 2005; Geidne & Jerlinder, 2016; Sørensen & Kars, 2011). Inaccessible facilities are also typically barriers for PLwD to participate in sport (DePauw & Gavron, 2005). These

are challenges that need to be met to fulfil the objective of an inclusive sports organization, particularly when it comes to PLwD with profound challenges who need extra support and adjustments (Sørensen & Kahrs, 2006). This means that inclusion can create a dilemma regarding the relationship between the individual and the environment. If SSC manages to achieve the goal of inclusion, what will it mean in practice? If all PLwD were included on similar terms to mainstream athletes, they would not be labelled as disabled, and if this happened, what consequences would it lead to? For instance, some athletes may need adapted equipment (which is usually more expensive than standard options), special assistance, or extra financial support due to increased costs in connection with training and competition. Would PLwD miss out on the specialized resources they need? Furthermore, at a higher organizational level, if a federation was successful with the inclusion process, would that mean they would not receive as much support from the SSC as those federations that had not been as successful? Several issues should become increasingly significant in the process of the organizational change, especially when it reaches the grassroots level where sporting activities occur.

As this concluding text illustrates, inclusion is complex and works at different levels of organized sport. In accordance with Geidne & Jerlinder (2016), we argue that there is insufficient knowledge about the impact of inclusion at different levels of organized sport.

Limitations

The respondents were asked to give answers on something that was not yet a reality for them. Their responses need to be seen in light of the information they had and the decisions and discussions they had been involved in during the inclusion process so far. Some of the respondents were more engaged and familiar than others with the issues surrounding inclusion, and some may have previous experiences of inclusive sport. Furthermore, it is crucial to ask PLwD about inclusion because some of them may experience absence, exclusion, and segregated group solutions as normal. Their previous experiences of social inclusion could be negative in contexts where the need for adaptation and support has been lacking. Consequently, it is important to note that the results reported in this study do not capture a complete picture of the barriers to and opportunities for inclusion from a broad perspective. Rather, the

results indicate factors that could enable or prevent successful inclusion in future sports organizations. We should also acknowledge that we did not have information about the impairment of each respondent labelled with disabilities or the severity of the impairment. It is likely that some athletes found it difficult to answer and administer the return of the questionnaire. This may have impacted the results and is clearly a limitation. With a longitudinal approach using mixed methods, these shortcomings could potentially be dealt with.

Conclusion

The next step in a wider investigation of the organizational change of the SSC towards inclusion of PLwD should take a longitudinal approach to understand how inclusion is received, interpreted, and implemented at the grassroots level. This could include interviews with representatives of the SSC and NSO, as well as both vertical (according to power and decision-making) and horizontal (different sports federations) representation. Research using a combination of quantitative and qualitative design approaches would also provide useful knowledge about the multiple effects of the inclusion process at different organizational levels in the SSC.

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