Article

Building Peace through Sports Projects: A Scoping Review

Felicity Clarke [1,*], **Aled Jones** [2] **and Lee Smith** [1]

1   School of Psychology and Sport Science, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge CB1 1PT, UK;
     lee.smith@aru.ac.uk
2   Global Sustainability Institute, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge CB1 1PT, UK; aled.jones@aru.ac.uk
*   Correspondence: felicity.clarke@pgr.aru.ac.uk

Abstract: The term peacebuilding has gained traction in academic works since introduction in the 1960s. In recent decades, sport for development and peace (SDP) has also captured the interest of the academic community, with a growing field of work. This scoping review identifies and considers the academic literature on SDP projects deployed as peacebuilding tools in post-conflict communities, to gain a greater understanding of those projects and draw inferences from them collectively. Using strict inclusion criteria, results of database searches were narrowed down to 30 publications, which the review explored through comparing the publications and their findings, to reveal the range of disciplines this research is emerging from, the countries projects are operating in, the demographics targeted, and other key data. The resulting conclusion is that there is scope for more targeted studies to clarify specific demographics to include, whether there is an ideal age to engage with youth, or an optimal timeframe for involvement. Many of the publications reference the importance of being part of broader initiatives, but the best context in which to utilise sport, and how much of an impact is being made on the wider communities, is yet to be determined.

Keywords: sport for peace; peacebuilding; post-conflict communities

1. Introduction

The transition process from conflict to peace has attracted increasing interest in recent decades, moving from peace-making (the brokering of truces) and peacekeeping (enforcement of truces) to peacebuilding. Peacebuilding was coined and defined in pioneering work by Johann Galtung and his Institute for Peace in the 1960s [1]. Peacebuilding is a continuous process of recovery and development, which can be used to move beyond a precarious ceasefire to more stable and positive peace, [2,3].

The end of the Second World War was a key point in history not only in Europe but across swathes of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, land was carved up and the borders of nation states redrawn. It ushered in the creation of the United Nations, replacing the failed League of Nations, to safeguard peace [4] and to work towards setting inalienable constitutional protection for all peoples with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights [5]. It was the end of the Cold War however, officially concluded on the 1st January 1991, that had the most profound impact on modern world politics and conflict [6]. The cessation of competition, geopolitically, culturally, and in arms, between the rival superpowers of the USSR and the USA moved the international system towards globalisation.

Wars became more asymmetric, the challenges more complex, the people more connected. Increasingly conflicts addressed by UN peace keeping operations (PKOs) were intrastate (e.g., civil wars) rather than interstate [7]. This adds an additional challenge over the sovereignty of nation states, and beyond that the sociopolitical landscape is changing with increased technological innovation: Technologies designed to foster better communications were co-opted into tools of violence, from guerrilla warfare in mountains of Colombia [8], to the calls to violence across radio airwaves in Rwanda [9], to sudden eruptions of dissent from social media during the Arab Spring [10]. The world has become more interactive than ever before, there have been vast technological advances, but

the traditional, top–down neoliberal (post-colonial) routes to development have failed to address global inequality [11–13]. There is acknowledgement that it is preferable for the international community to mediate and facilitate peacekeeping over engagement in active conflict [14]. There are innumerable programmes in post-conflict regions with the aim of establishing long-term peace, as part of wider sustainable development efforts, yet the 2016 Global Peace Index rated just 10 countries as free from conflict [15]. In order to achieve global peace, the importance of successful peacebuilding, to prevent recourse to violence, cannot be overstated. There are numerous ways peacebuilding projects can manifest in communities, but the use of sports is growing as a post-conflict intervention tool to prevent further violence [16].

Sports, broadly defined as structured, planned programmes of activity, with the aim of improving health or maintaining fitness, have been shown to have enormous benefits on the physical health and well-being of individuals, including reducing risk of non-communicable diseases [17,18], and the potential benefits to communities are widely recognised [19,20]. Studies considering how and why sport can be utilised [21,22] have arrived at various explanations, from its universality to its expression of micro-conflict, from its required discipline to the freedom of play it affords adherents. In addition to the logistical challenges of delivering sports programmes that also engage with one or more social challenges—from increased female participation, to HIV awareness [23–25]—large-scale events and tournaments can be used as a diplomatic tool in international relations, with events such as the Olympic Games being symbolically linked to values of fairness, respect, and cooperation [26].

The United Nations created an inter-agency task force on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) active from 2001 to 2017, to coordinate and encourage efforts, and to bring together different agencies who worked with sports, including the World Health Organisation (WHO), UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), and UN Development Programme (UNDP). The task force took a broad definition of sport as "all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being, and social interaction", acknowledging the important developmental roles of play and recreation alongside more formal competitive sport [27]. A key factor in the wish to engage with and promote sport is its recognition as "a cost-effective and flexible tool in promoting peace and development objectives" [27]. Although the commission formally ended in December 2017, support continues, with the UN Department on Economic and Social Affairs releasing a new advocacy brief on Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) in December 2020. SDP broadly refers to programmes that use sport to build peace and social cohesion in underdeveloped, conflict or post-conflict areas [25,28]. There have been high-profile examples of SDP in the bringing together of players from both sides of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories: both PeacePlayers International (Basketball) and Football4Peace (Soccer) have received international acclaim for their work bringing together Jewish and Arab children in sports projects to foster understanding between the two communities, in the hope of leaving a legacy of more than improved ball skills for young people (cf. Clinton Global Initiative) [29].

Literature Analysis

The link between participation in sports and development outcomes is deemed contingent on multiple external and contextual factors, such as the types of sports, or the demographics involved [30] or even the values of the coaches [31]. While a growing body of research has been conducted in the field of SDP, to date, there has been no study to bring together findings from these kinds of peacebuilding projects, or any consensus on what defines the success of such programmes. It is important to map the research literature on these SDP projects, with a view to inform future projects in their most effective use: Defined parameters and understanding of how these projects can be managed within wider peacebuilding initiatives [32,33] will help ensure more meaningful legacy.

When the UNOSDP was first convened in 2002, it conducted an inventory of existing SDP programmes, identifying 120 initiatives, half of which were run or supported by the UN, with the rest coming from sports federations, government programmes, or NGOs. It tried to group them by aim as part of its process of establishing data on existing and planned projects but did not distinguish between development aims and peacebuilding. Moreover, a systematic search strategy of the academic literature was not applied, and the project was carried out 17 years ago. Existing areas of research concerning SDP programmes are thus likely not included.

The aim of the present study is to conduct a scoping review to collate the academic literature on SDP in order to map areas of study, to assess the findings of academic literature on this subject, and specifically to narrow the study to the area of interest, namely the area of post-conflict peacebuilding. To date, this information has not been collated, and this review therefore fills this gap in the literature. This paper contributes an overview, with recommendations for further research. The scoping review format was chosen to survey academic literature on projects that use sports specifically as an instrument to build peace in post-conflict communities, with that being the expressed, if not sole, aim. The scoping review allows for a broad range of search results to be considered, with the included texts narrowed based on fixed exclusion criteria, to only those that are relevant to the research questions:

1. Why are sports projects used in peacebuilding?
2. How are sports projects used in peacebuilding?
3. What do we know about sports projects used in peacebuilding?

In looking for the literature to inform these questions, excluding those that pertain to a broader context, or have a purely theoretical approach to the benefits of sports in SDP, (without referencing any projects specifically), scoping reviews allow for evaluation of the findings, as well as the type of academic research that exists within this field. As a mapping tool, it is growing in popularity [34].

2. Materials and Methods

The review follows the Arksey and O'Malley framework, the original methodological structure proposed for conducting this type of study, while taking into account the clarifications and enhancements proposed by Levac, Colquhoun, and O'Brian [35]: (1) identifying the research question; (2) identifying relevant studies; (3) study selection; (4) charting the data; (5) collating, summarising, and reporting the results; and an optional stage (6) consultation [36]. It is worth noting that the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) developed further enhancements to the methodological framework, in order to standardise the practice of conducting scoping reviews, aligning the protocol with that of a systematic review [37]. It is not uncommon in healthcare to use scoping reviews as a precursor to a full systematic review [37,38], although it's purpose here is purely for mapping and identifying potential gaps in the literature.

2.1. Research Questions

The key questions to be explored are as follows:

1. why sports projects are used in peacebuilding,
2. how sports projects are used in peacebuilding, and
3. what do we know about sports projects used in peacebuilding.

2.2. Identify Relevant Studies

The review followed a pre-planned but unpublished protocol: In order to identify relevant studies, comprehensive database searches were conducted in Web of Science and Scopus on the 23 December 2020. The search terms used for each were (sport* OR "physical activity" OR "physical exercise") AND (peace*) with the searches on title, abstracts, and keywords.

This was determined by trialling several combinations, to cast a wide net over multi-disciplinary peer-reviewed published research, without incorporating too many irrelevant references, with similar search terms, for example those around conflicts in competitive sport.

The searches were not limited by field or publication date in the first instance. The study limitations include publication bias, in that only those projects that were successful are likely to have made it to publication, and therefore be included in this review. Another limitation is that only papers published in English language were included. In order to check that the database searches had not missed key texts, two journals were selected from beyond the database, Journal of Peace Research and Journal for International Relations and Development, articles between key dates (1990–2021) were screened, and no additional articles were found for inclusion.

2.3. Study Selection

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established in order to gain the most thorough understanding of these types of projects, amidst all the academic research gathered in the fields of "sport", and "sports for development and peace" more generally. The initial screening was primarily on title, with some consultation of journal subject area and/or abstracts if the content or context was unclear. Those not related to field, but with similar keywords (for example papers on angling in the Peace river, or cardiac health in veterans) were removed in this first sweep, reducing the number of references to 469.

More thorough criteria for screening were devised post hoc, using the titles, abstracts, and (where necessary) full texts.

Inclusion was based upon the following:

(1) Community: Communities that have been involved in a recognised conflict, be it interstate, internal, or state formation [39], and have moved into a peacebuilding stage. There is no fixed timescale for this transition, but it can be characterised by an absence of open conflict: Active conflict would be defined as more than 25 battle-related deaths per year (UCDP [40]).

(2) Timescale: conflicts included were all post-cold war, so within the last 28 years. This is a useful timeframe for comparison, as the modern world order of multi-polarity emerged after the cessation of hostilities between the two superpowers, USA and USSR.

(3) Project type: Programmes of sports or physical exercise (i.e., planned programmes of activity with the aim of improving health), in any demographic within the community, at any level (grassroots/high performance) with the aim of peace, or specifically peacebuilding included, in its objectives

The exclusion criteria therefore included removing research (1) that focused on the "development" aspect of SPD, in favour of the peace-specific research, (2) that was published prior to 1990 (3), was around a sporting event rather than a programme (4), was based on projects in active conflict or that were not in the post-conflict stage, (5) was written from a broad theoretical or pedagogical viewpoint rather than practical studies. Finally, (6) any papers that were not available in a referenced academic journal were removed (although two academic book texts were included in the final selection).

A proportion of the title-screened references were then cross checked by a second reviewer for consistency. The final number of references to be included was 30 (see Figure 1).
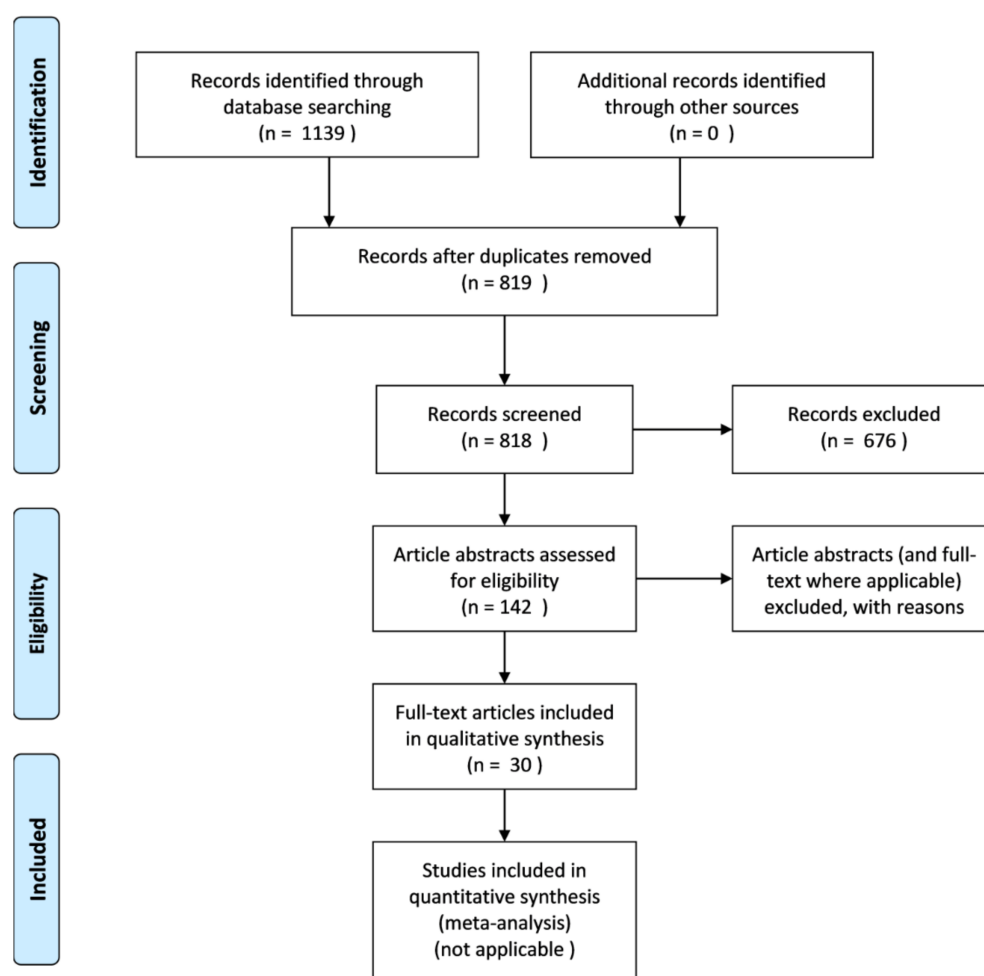
Figure 1. PRISMA flow chart of study selection process.

2.4. Charting the Data

Once the final publications for inclusion were selected, a qualitative approach was taken to stage 4, commencing with a thematic coding: This was an iterative process of looking for trends and differences between the publication selections. The first round looked at easily obtainable data across the publications:

a.　Date of publication
b.　Journal/publisher
c.　Sports mentioned
d.　Country/region of operation
e.　Academic institution of first author(s)

The data were then reviewed again for

f.　Engagement of local actors
g.　Demographics engaged
h.　Timescales of projects
i.　Research method
j.　Research disciplines of authors

2.5. Collating, Summarising, Reporting Results

These data were collated to be summarised as a narrative review. In this scoping review, it was not possible to make a direct comparison of results from the papers as they each reported different information, in different styles.

A second reviewer, considering the same coding criteria on a data-charting form, against a sample of the papers in the study, ensured consistency with the research questions as advised by Levac et al. [35]. This is reported and then followed by a discussion of findings.

3. Results

The database searches made on 23 December 2020 and produced the following outputs:

The Web of Science search found 511 results and Scopus search produced 628, creating a total 1139 records.

Once duplicate references (n = 320) and 1 retracted article were removed, the number of records was 818 (see Figure 1).

The screening process with inclusion and exclusion of records resulted in a final 30 publications (28 journal articles and 2 books) to be analysed, which are explored below.

In line with the data fields identified for comparison in Section 2.4, the following findings are reported:

A. Date of publication

The first notable (quantifiable) finding when looking across this range of publications is the publication dates (see Figure 2).
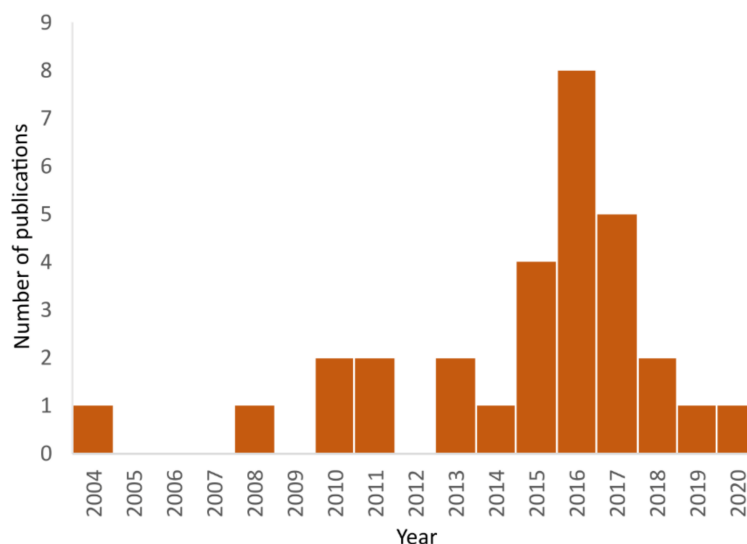
Figure 2. Dates of publications for journals and books featured in scoping review.

In line with the selection criteria, the publications (and the conflicts they referred to) were screened by date to be within the last 30 years, that is to say since the end of the Cold War and the associated shift in international relations. After applying the other criteria, none of the 30 records for this review were dated before 2004.

B. Journal/publisher

The 30 publications were published across 16 peer-reviewed journals (see Table 1) and 2 books.

The range of publications is reflective of a limited field of study (cf. J), whereby the majority of the journals are sport oriented—of the 16 titles, 10 journals are specifically sport (or physical activity) related, representing 19 of the 30 publications reviewed. Within these, there were subsets of foci, but the majority were journals focusing on the social science aspect (such as sports psychology, sociology, history, and politics).

Of the non-sports specific journals, 4 have "peace" or "peacebuilding" in their title, one is described as development studies (Third-World Quarterly) and one is gender focused (Women's Studies International Forum).

Table 1. Journals featured in scoping review.

Journal Names	Number of Papers
International Journal of the History of Sport	1
International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics	3
International Review for the Sociology of Sport	3
International Sports Volunteering	1
Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research	2
Journal of Peacebuilding and Development	1
Journal of Physical Activity and Health	1
Journal of Sport Psychology in Action	1
Peace and Conflict Studies	1
Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology	1
Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise, and Health	6
Soccer and Society	1
Sociology of Sport Journal	1
Sport in Society	1
Third World Quarterly	3
Women's Studies International Forum	1
Total	**28**

C. Sports

There was variation in the sports discussed in each paper, but overall, the scene was incredibly football orientated, with 15 publications based on football (soccer)-related projects and 8 referring to multiple sports (at least two distinct sports), where one was football (soccer). This equates to 23 of 30 papers featuring football, (see Figure 3).
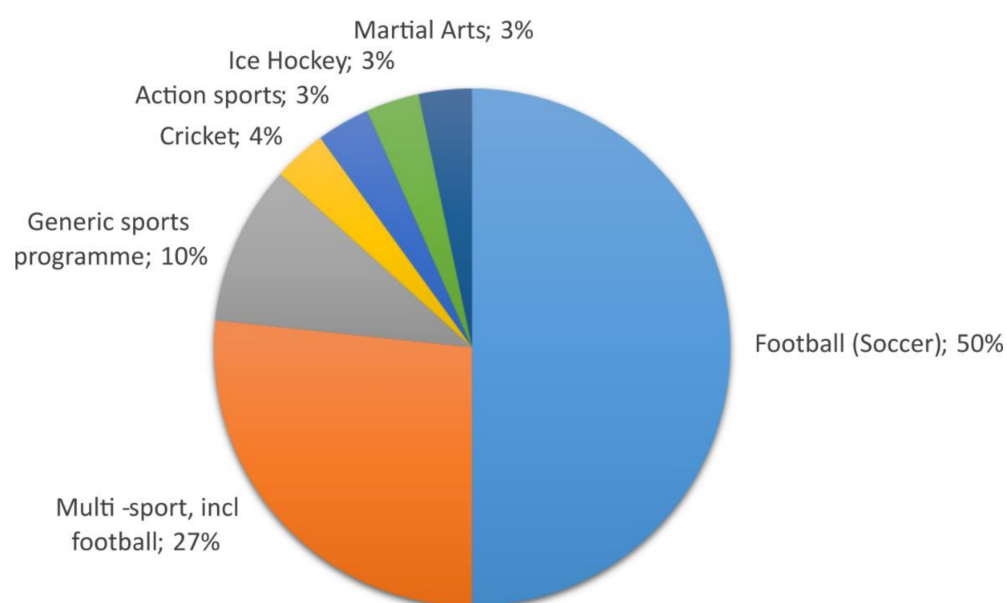
Figure 3. Publications by sports featured.

Much has been said on the subject of football (soccer), it is the most popular sport in the world, with an estimated global following of 4 bn [41]. It creates great wealth, according to Forbes, "the 20 most valuable soccer teams in the world are worth an average

of $1.69 bn" (cf. Forbes.com). Nevertheless, at the heart of the beautiful game [42] is a simplicity; minimal equipment is required (primarily a ball, also the basis for solo practice), consistent rules provided by an international body (International Football Association Board), and innumerable variations for informal adaptations—the area to play in (pitch), goal demarcation, and number of players can all vary to fit context available. In its earliest incarnations, football was a game to be played between whole villages (cf. FIFA.com), and although the rivalry and associated tribalism can be problematic, exacerbating tensions and arousing divisions along local/national/ethnic lines [43,44], there are advocates who see its potential to be an inclusive and equalising experience, where all can play together—although acknowledging its limitations [45,46].

One of the single-sport and one of the multi-sport publications refer to cricket programmes, with a further one referencing the importance of cricket as a national game in the context of Sri Lanka [47]. Cricket is the second most popular sport in the world, with an estimated 2.5 bn fans [41]. Two of the multi-sport publications refer to basketball. There is one publication around the sport of ice hockey [48].

Of the remaining publications, there are three references to generic sports programmes where the nature of the sports is not referenced, as in those publications that is not the focus, but a vehicle to other discussions: on the nature of research methodologies and engaging local actors in the process, for example [49].

The final two are both individual as opposed to team sports: one looks at martial arts [50] and one is a study on action sports, such as surfing, snowboarding, or parkour [51]. There is also one multi-sport publication that looks at cycling in Rwanda [52]. These publications stand apart with their non-team related elements and focus on the individual player/athlete.

D. Country

The publications cover a wide range of countries in different stages of post-conflict recovery, from across Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and South America. There are 23 single-country publications, and 7 featuring multiple countries (at least 2). Twenty-two countries are featured across the range of publications, including the territory of Palestine. Not all countries featured fit within the definition of a post-conflict state, but the papers were included for projects in at least one country/region that did meet the inclusion criteria: where possible to isolate the SPD projects, information relating to projects in countries or regions that did not meet the criteria have been excluded, for example, projects operating in Israel/Palestine, where conflict is ongoing [45]; Jamaica [53], which has struggled with political unrest, but was featured for development rather than peacebuilding efforts; or projects reported from Colombia before it was recognised as post-conflict [54]. Eighteen eligible countries are included in the review.

Some countries appear in the literature more frequently than others, South Africa features in six publications, (three as sole focus, three as one of multiple countries featured in a publication); UK (Northern Ireland) features in five (three as sole, two as part of multiple-country studies); Liberia features in 4 (3 as sole, and 1 as part of multiple country studies); Uganda is the subject of three publications; Kosovo is the subject of three (two as sole, one as part of multiple country studies) Rwanda also features in three (one as sole, and two as part of multiple-country studies); Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe each feature twice, (once as sole studies, once as part of multiple-country studies).

All of the countries these projects take place in, bar the UK, are listed on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of ODA recipients, that is countries eligible to receive official development assistance. This list is established by gross national income per capita, (indexed by the World Bank) or identification as one of the "least developed countries" by the UN [55].

E. Academic institution of first authors

Regarding the origins of the publications, it is not possible to infer meaning or correlate to author background, nationality, or ethnicity from academic institutions of the authors, but it is worth noting that only 5 of 30 were published from within the same country

as the projects they study, of which three were here in the UK, one in Kosovo, and one in Colombia.

Seventeen came from European institutions, nine from North America, three from Australasia (Australia/New Zealand), and one from South America.

Therefore, while 26 of the publications included projects in ODA-recipient countries, indexed as least developed countries (13)/lower–middle income countries and territories (6)/upper–middle income countries and territories (5), all but two were published from institutions in the global north/developed nations.

F.   Engagement of local actors

Increasing reference is made to working with, rather than imposing projects on or for communities [56], there is a growing unease at the potential imperial or colonial under- (or over-) tones of a lot of development and peacebuilding efforts.

Twenty publications made explicit mention of the importance of a local actor engagement, from the traditional gatekeeper role [57] to the training of locals as coaches [53,58], to a completely local/grassroots focus [49,59]. A further four implied engagement with local actors, noting cooperation of local community groups [47], or with semi-organic interaction with local community encouraged [60]. Whitley and Johnson [49] and Collison and Marchesseault [52], both raised the issue of local actor involvement in the research too, with different approaches to methodologies (cf. I).

Six made no specific mention of any local actor involvement or engagement. In some cases, this was due to the nature of the research, for example reviewing advisory panel work conducted over 12 months [61], but for other publications, the omission felt more incongruous, raising queries over access and inclusivity.

G.   Demographics engaged

There is a high focus on children and youth, although few publications offer specifics on who the projects are targeting (and why). Across all publications (30), the target demographics of the projects featured are primarily adults (2), the whole population (2), or youth (26).

Within the "youth" category, five publications gave an age range for at least one SDP project's target demographic: 4–18 year olds [62], 5–17 year olds [51], 9–13 year olds [63], under-10s plus 10–12year olds [64], and 12–15 year olds [65]. Two referred to teenagers or adolescents [53,66].

Other's specific focus was on vulnerable or under-represented populations, such as: women and girls (5); ex-combatants (usually, but not exclusively male) (2); disabled participants (1); unemployed (1); those in poverty (1); or engaging with HIV communities (4).

H.   Timescales of projects

The question of timescale could not be directly reviewed as there was no consistent reporting of duration of projects, duration of study, and without exact knowledge of when the studies took place cross-checked against the end of conflict, understanding of the time gap between conflict end and project starting is not possible. It is worth noting also that states can move between different stages of post-conflict resolution at different rates [67], but it is a long-term commitment [68].

I.   Research method

All of the publications used a qualitative approach to their research (30), with a range of approaches used including case studies (5), open or semi-structured interviews (9), and self-field observations (4). Five used narrative reporting. The most common research approach was ethnographic studies (9), as well as self-reflection (5) and autoethnography (1). The following self-classifications featured: community-based participatory (CBP) approach (1); post-development theory (1); participatory mapping (1); dialogic methodology (1); life history analysis (LHA) (1); participatory social interaction (PSIR) study (1); and, photovoice methodology (1).

There was also evidence of literature based/theoretical analysis (4) and analysis of policy (1). There was one health intervention (1), which featured a quantitative fitness testing element, although within a qualitative case study [66].

There was a strong focus on the experience of the authors of the studies (as researchers, and/or volunteers) (9), including the autoethnographic study and the PSIR study, as well as some narrative work based on personal experiences. Only a few publications directly engaged with the beneficiaries of programmes, the former child-soldiers of Sierra Leone [60], Liberia [43], or under-privileged, internally displaced youth of the Soacha municipality in Colombia [62]. The self-awareness of authors and wariness of potential for neo-colonial/patronising intervention fits with the discussions around involvement/engagement of local community actors (cf. F).

J.   Research disciplines of authors

Several of the authors referred to themselves within the context of SDP, or as SDP researchers [54], but as the focus was on background, and for the sake of consistency, the school or department, within the academic institute of the first author (cf. E), was recorded for each publication. This was only ever except in cases where the first author was a practitioner rather than an academic [64] or the academic discipline of the author was specifically discussed within the publication, accepting this to be a more accurate or specific record: for example, "being a sociologist isn't just a job, it's more a vocation, a way of life, and as such as a sociologist everything you see and do stimulates and is filtered through and activated by your trained sociological imagination" [45] (p.1).

Of the 30, nine were from the field of "Sociology" and "Social Science", including reference to "Cultural studies". There was strong representation of "Sports", or sports-related disciplines (including "Physical Education" and "Kinesiology") in the backgrounds (16). Related "Health" or "Public Health" also was well represented (6). There were two "Management" background ("Sports Management", and "Business Management") and one reference to "Sports Psychology" (1).

Surprisingly, there were only two first authors with backgrounds in "Peace and Conflict" studies (2). This can be related to "Political Science" (1), and the international relations/governance background (1).

4. Discussion

In addition to the comparative results above, thematic coding of the papers identified the following interrelated concepts emerging from across the range of publications in the review: (1) sports projects need to be part of broader initiatives; (2) there is a need for local actor engagement; (3) context is key; (4) sport as a vehicle (i.e., to engagement), rather than a means to an end goal; and additionally, (5) the choice of sport can be problematic.

The first identified theme was the need to be part of broader development or peacebuilding initiatives. These projects fall under the umbrella of SPD, and the distinction is rarely made between the focus of development or peacebuilding when referring to them as such. As the results show, the majority of the projects featured were based in DAC-recipient countries, therefore it would be appropriate to assume that, for these nations, the tasks of peacebuilding and development go hand in hand.

If contextual factors are deemed to be instrumental in defining outcomes from participation in sports [30], the geographical location would be a key detail. Other than the relative "low/lower–middle income" or "least developed" categorisation of the majority of countries, there is little to link the beneficiary nations in terms of geography, language, religion, or climate. The singular unifying feature comes from the recipient countries' historical colonisation or occupation. This raises interesting reflections on the relationships between the countries that patronise SDP efforts, and those who supposedly benefit. Washiya [46] states that the reality for the local programme participants can veer greatly from the symbolism attributed by NGOs; their motivations and experiences will not always meet the expectation of external actors. Clarke and Salisbury [58] discuss the complexity of motivations from both national and international volunteers, noting the notion of voluntourism, can be used to recruit, based on the notion of life-changing opportunity and self-improvement. Ford [69] goes a step further, wary of the "White saviour" complex, expressing a need for critical reflection to prevent volunteers being the main beneficiaries

from SDP projects, as they use them as educational tools in their quest for self-development. This can be viewed as a kind of neo-colonialism, based on stereotyped or racist paternalism. This status gap between donor and recipient is also reflected in the gap between institutions at which the authors of the study are based and the countries which they study: There is a distance, between global north and the global south, not simple geographically but economically in terms of GNP per capita.

Access will play a part in the focus of what are case studies, and local expertise may explain multiple studies of a specific region by specific authors. Many publications look at aspects of, but never critically review, projects and NGOs they studied. This may be due to reliance on, or relationship with gatekeepers/funders or personal involvement in the projects. Many of those studies had greater, or primary, focus on those running the projects (or conducting the research), than on the participants or beneficiaries (cf. I), [58,69,70]. This directly contradicts the general view of SDP project reporting—that it is done from the perspective of programme beneficiary [54].

Of the several themes identified in discourse, one of the strongest is the importance of involving local actors, as key to meaningful engagement. While some of the authors believe that they can overcome the gap between researcher and subject/participant, using a PSIR framework to break down relational boundaries [52]. The traditional (Western-centric) model of development is seen as flawed [71], and the need for decolonisation of SPD research is recognised [49].

While the involvement of local actors appears to be growing, there is also recognition of the importance of context, with cultural sensitivities and indigenous understanding a significant factor [50,70]. Rather than a passive role, "international SDP agencies have pursued more 'liberal-constructivist' and critical strategies in Kosovo, by promoting inclusive, empowering, and transformative relations with local communities" [57] (p.27). It is noted that the post-colonial overhang may leave at best a sense of duty and at worst a sense of superiority [58], but there is a failure to acknowledge the neo-colonial legacy of culture when it comes to the sports.

Several of the publications indicate that, beyond simply acknowledging that context is key, the choice of sport was contentious or potentially problematic. Collinson [44] questions the appropriateness of football as a vehicle. Sugden [72] argues it can be used to further division or exclusion. A far greater number implied that the sport itself was irrelevant, simply a vehicle to more vital interventions in fractured or vulnerable communities, a means to harness targeted demographics into wider peacebuilding. The limitations of sport when it comes to socioeconomic inequalities are acknowledged. References [73,74] explain how national sport can be identity building but only alongside nation building. That so many of the sports utilised in projects were also cultural exports from the global north is barely noted. Along with language, the popularity of sports such as football, cricket, and tennis is a remarkable legacy of colonisation. These sports have international governing bodies based in the same countries as the researchers are publishing from. For all the talk of decolonising the research and grassroots/local actor engagement in SDP, there is little to no discussion of indigenous games.

Looking for lessons on what makes a successful intervention, it is very hard to make assertions: it is hard not to question a lack of clarity of purpose in many of these projects; at the very least, the lack of specific demographics approached. Many of the publications refer to generic "youth", although some state the ages and explanation, such as children under 10 years old being receptive to positive teachings [64], it is unclear whether this demographic is targeted so often because they are the ideal age range to effect change, or if they are simply a captive audience with many cited as lacking agency due to vulnerability or social exclusion [60,69]. Many of the publications reference the importance of being part of broader initiatives, many assert the importance of working with children and young people, but it is never explicit how much of an impact is being made on the wider communities. Sports-based interventions are most effective when organisations engage with local stakeholders or are supported from a grassroots basis [49,52], for greater

social impact. It is recommended that future research should look to these and focus on identifying the most beneficial timescales of the projects within various post-conflict contexts [75].

5. Conclusions

SDP is often referred to as an interdisciplinary field of study, but there is little evidence of cross-discipline publications drawing across different areas of experience. The interdisciplinary label may be borne out by the multi-author nature of many of the papers, potentially pulling together researchers from more than one background. One author wrote from within an interdisciplinary "global issues" research institute [50], another from an interdisciplinary social sciences/humanities background [48], but a review of the authorship suggests that these varied disciplines come largely from within one wider field: from different social science backgrounds or different sports backgrounds, as opposed to a genuine innovative cross-discipline approach.

With regard to the methodology, while there is variance, the most common approach remains case studies, supported by interviews and field observations. Qualitative research is a useful tool for understanding complex contextual studies, and many of the methodologies are an effective way to relay personal narratives and experience, but the lack of quantitative data (or critical comparative case studies), makes it hard to draw empirical conclusions. There is also little room for measures of success in these fields. This is not least because clear objectives would need to be established to measure progress against. Greater scrutiny of the projects may be limited by the gatekeeper relationships required to gain access, but more so if those researchers are also involved in the SDP projects. Honest critical self-reflection has limitations; finding ways to engage more indigenous voices in the research and simultaneously permitting critical analysis of projects could be more enlightening.

This is also where the lack of timeframes becomes relevant: The defining of post-conflict intervention presents its own difficulties. Interest in support for peacebuilding from the international community tends to diminish over time, but the risk of relapse peaks around 5 years, making the next phase (5–10 years) both less appealing to funders and more vital to peacebuilding efforts [75]. Understanding the optimal duration, cultural contexts, or sports to adopt, could mean more targeted approaches: Several of the papers reported the projects as of benefit and value but to whom and to what extent deserves greater exploration.

References

1. Galtung, J.; Fischer, D.; Fischer, D. *Johan Galtung: Pioneer of Peace Research*; Springer: New York, NY, USA, 2013; Volume 5.
2. Galtung, J. *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*; Sage: New York, NY, 1996; Volume 14.
3. Schmid, H. Peace research and politics. *J. Peace Res.* **1968**, *5*, 217–232. [CrossRef]
4. Luard, E. The Years of Western Domination 1945–1955. In *A History of the United Nations*; Springer: Heidelberg, Germany, 1982; Volume 1.
5. Morsink, J. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting, and Intent*; University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, PA, USA, 1999.
6. Murithi, T. *Ethics of Peacebuilding*; Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, UK, 2008.

7. Mack, A. Global political violence: Explaining the post-Cold War decline. In *Strategies for Peace: Contributions of International Organizations, States, and Non-State Actors*; Rittberger, V., Fischer, M., Eds.; Barbara Budrich Pub.: Toronto, ON, Canada, 2008; pp. 75–107.

8. de Castro Leal, D.; Krüger, M.; Misaki, K.; Randall, D.; Wulf, V. Guerilla Warfare and the Use of New (and Some Old) Technology: Lessons from FARC's Armed Struggle in Colombia. In Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Glasgow, Scotland, UK, 4–9 May 2019; pp. 1–12.

9. Li, D. Echoes of violence: Considerations on radio and genocide in Rwanda. *J. Genocide Res.* **2004**, *6*, 9–27. [CrossRef]

10. Stepanova, E. The role of information communication technologies in the "Arab Spring". *Ponars Eurasia* **2011**, *15*, 1–6.

11. Ovaska, T. The failure of development aid. *Cato J.* **2003**, *23*, 175.

12. Chang, H.J.; Grabel, I. *Reclaiming Development: An Alternative Economic Policy Manual*; Zed Books Ltd.: London, UK, 2014.

13. Sachs, J.D. *The Age of Sustainable Development*; Columbia University Press: New York, NY, USA, 2015.

14. Sorenson, D.S.; Wood, P.C. *The Politics of Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era*; Routledge: Abingdon on Thames, UK, 2004.

15. Global Peace Index 2017. Available online: http://visionofhumanity.org/indexes/global-peace-index/ (accessed on 25 January 2021).

16. Johnston, L.M. *Sports, Peacebuilding and Ethics*; Routledge: Abingdon on Thames, UK, 2017.

17. Oja, P.; Titze, S.; Kokko, S.; Kujala, U.M.; Heinonen, A.; Kelly, P.; Koski, P.; Foster, C. Health benefits of different sport disciplines for adults: Systematic review of observational and intervention studies with meta-analysis. *Br. J. Sports Med.* **2015**, *49*, 434–440. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

18. Chomistek, A.K.; Cook, N.R.; Flint, A.J.; Rimm, E.B. Vigorous-intensity leisure-time physical activity and risk of major chronic disease in men. *Med. Sci. Sports Exerc.* **2012**, *44*, 1898–1905. [CrossRef]

19. Calloway, J. Leave no child behind. Recreation and sports: Instruments for world peace. *Youth Stud. Aust.* **2004**, *23*, 35.

20. Coalter, F. *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* Routledge: Abingdon on Thames, UK, 2007.

21. Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace. Available online: https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/downloads/rtp_sdp_iwg_harnessing_the_power_of_sport_for_development_and_peace.pdf (accessed on 25 January 2021).

22. Giulianotti, R.; Hognestad, H.; Spaaij, R. Sport for development and peace: Power, politics, and patronage. *J. Glob. Sport Manag.* **2016**, *1*, 129–141. [CrossRef]

23. Kidd, B. A new social movement: Sport for development and peace. *Sport Soc.* **2008**, *11*, 370–380. [CrossRef]

24. Giulianotti, R. Sport, peacemaking and conflict resolution: A contextual analysis and modelling of the sport, development and peace sector. *Ethn. Racial Stud.* **2010**, *34*, 207–228. [CrossRef]

25. Schulenkorf, N.; Edwards, D. Maximizing positive social impacts: Strategies for sustaining and leveraging the benefits of intercommunity sport events in divided societies. *J. Sport Manag.* **2012**, *26*, 379–390. [CrossRef]

26. Smith, G.; Cahn, A.; Ford, S. Sports commerce and peace: The special case of the Special Olympics. *J. Bus. Ethic.* **2009**, *89*, 587–602. [CrossRef]

27. United Nations Office on Sports for Development and Peace. Available online: https://www.un.org/sport/ (accessed on 4 February 2018).

28. Lyras, A.; Peachey, J.W. Integrating sport-for-development theory and praxis. *Sport Manag. Rev.* **2011**, *14*, 311–326. [CrossRef]

29. Sugden, J. *Sport and Community Relations in Northern Ireland and Israel*; University College Dublin Press: Dublin, Ireland, 2005; pp. 238–251.

30. Donnelly, P.; Coakley, J.J. *The Role of Recreation in Promoting Social Inclusion*; Laidlaw Foundation: Toronto, ON, Canada, 2002.

31. Spaaij, R.; Oxford, S.; Jeanes, R. Transforming communities through sport? Critical pedagogy and sport for development. *Sport Educ. Soc.* **2016**, *21*, 570–587. [CrossRef]

32. Giulianotti, R. The sport, development and peace sector: A model of four social policy domains. *J. Soc. Policy* **2010**, *40*, 757–776. [CrossRef]

33. Svensson, P.G. Organizational hybridity: A conceptualization of how sport for development and peace organizations respond to divergent institutional demands. *Sport Manag. Rev.* **2017**, *20*, 443–454. [CrossRef]

34. Pham, M.T.; Rajić, A.; Greig, J.D.; Sargeant, J.M.; Papadopoulos, A.; McEwen, S.A. A scoping review of scoping reviews: Advancing the approach and enhancing the consistency. *Res. Synth. Methods* **2014**, *5*, 371–385. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

35. Colquhoun, H.L.; Levac, D.; O'Brien, K.K.; Straus, S.; Tricco, A.C.; Perrier, L.; Kastner, M.; Moher, D. Scoping reviews: Time for clarity in definition, methods, and reporting. *J. Clin. Epidemiol.* **2014**, *67*, 1291–1294. [CrossRef]

36. Arksey, H.; O'Malley, L. Scoping studies: Towards a methodological framework. *Int. J. Soc. Res. Methodol.* **2005**, *8*, 19–32. [CrossRef]

37. Peters, M.D.; Godfrey, C.M.; Khalil, H.; McInerney, P.; Parker, D.; Soares, C.B. Guidance for conducting systematic scoping reviews. *Int. J. Evid. Based Healthc.* **2015**, *13*, 141–146. [CrossRef]

38. Munn, Z.; Peters, M.D.J.; Stern, C.; Tufanaru, C.; McArthur, A.; Aromataris, E. Systematic review or scoping review? Guidance for authors when choosing between a systematic or scoping review approach. *BMC Med Res. Methodol.* **2018**, *18*, 1–7. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

39. Wallensteen, P. *Understanding Conflict Resolution War, Peace, and the Global System*; SAGE Publications: London, UK; Thousand Oaks, Ca, USA, 2002.

40. Uppsala Conflict Data Program. Available online: https://ucdp.uu.se/ (accessed on 25 January 2021).

41. The Most Popular Sports in the World? Available online: https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-most-popular-sports-in-the-world.html (accessed on 3 January 2021).

42. Fish, R.L. *My Life and the Beautiful Game: The Autobiography of Pelé*; Skyhorse Publishing Company Inc.: New York, NY, USA, 2007.

43. Rookwood, J.; Palmer, C. Invasion games in war-torn nations: Can football help to build peace? *Soccer Soc.* **2011**, *12*, 184–200. [CrossRef]

44. Collison, H. *Youth and Sport for Development: The Seduction of Football in Liberia*; Springer: Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany, 2016.

45. Sugden, J.; Tomlinson, A. *Sport and Peace-Building in Divided Societies: Playing with Enemies*; Routledge: Abingdon on Thames, UK, 2017.

46. Washiya, Y. Playing together to be able to play–extending field-based inquiry from post conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Qual. Res. Sport Exerc. Health* **2017**, *9*, 453–468. [CrossRef]

47. Schulenkorf, N. Sport events and ethnic reconciliation: Attempting to create social change between Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim sportspeople in war-torn Sri Lanka. *Int. Rev. Sociol. Sport* **2010**, *45*, 273–294. [CrossRef]

48. Lepp, E. Division on ice: Shared space and civility in Belfast. *J. Peacebuilding Dev.* **2018**, *13*, 32–45. [CrossRef]

49. Whitley, M.A.; Johnson, A.J. Using a community-based participatory approach to research and programming in northern Uganda: Two researchers' confessional tales. *Qual. Res. Sport Exerc. Heal.* **2013**, *7*, 1–22. [CrossRef]

50. Hayhurst, L.M.; MacNeill, M.; Kidd, B.; Knoppers, A. November. Gender relations, gender-based violence and sport for development and peace: Questions, concerns and cautions emerging from Uganda. *Women's Stud. Int. Forum* **2014**, *47*, 157–167. [CrossRef]

51. Thorpe, H. Action sports for youth development: Critical insights for the SDP community. *Int. J. Sport Policy Politics* **2016**, *8*, 91–116. [CrossRef]

52. Collison, H.; Marchesseault, D. Finding the missing voices of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP): Using a 'Participatory Social Interaction Research'methodology and anthropological perspectives within African developing countries. *Sport Soc.* **2016**, *21*, 226–242. [CrossRef]

53. Collison, H.; Darnell, S.; Giulianotti, R.; Howe, P.D. The inclusion conundrum: A critical account of youth and gender issues within and beyond sport for development and peace interventions. *Soc. Incl.* **2017**, *5*, 223–231. [CrossRef]

54. Cardenas, A. Sport and peace-building in divided societies: A case study on Colombia and Northern Ireland. *Peace Confl. Stud.* **2016**, *23*, 4.

55. OECD. Available online: http://www.oecd.org/ (accessed on 25 January 2021).

56. Hartmann, D.; Kwauk, C. Sport and development: An overview, critique, and reconstruction. *J. Sport Soc. Issues* **2011**, *35*, 284–305. [CrossRef]

57. Giulianotti, R.; Collison, H.; Darnell, S.; Howe, D. Contested states and the politics of sport: The case of Kosovo–division, development, and recognition. *Int. J. Sport Policy Politi.* **2017**, *9*, 121–136. [CrossRef]

58. Clarke, J.; Salisbury, P. The motives and social capital gains of sport for development and peace volunteers in Cameroon. *International Sport Volunt.* **2017**, *212*, 212–233. [CrossRef]

59. Young, K.; Okada, C. Engaging the field through retrospective methods: A Cambodian story. *Qual. Res. Sport Exerc. Health* **2016**, *8*, 456–471. [CrossRef]

60. Dyck, C.B. Football and post-war reintegration: Exploring the role of sport in DDR processes in Sierra Leone. *Third World Q.* **2011**, *32*, 395–415. [CrossRef]

61. Bairner, A. Inclusive Soccer—Exclusive Politics? Sports Policy in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement. *Sociol. Sport J.* **2004**, *21*, 270–286. [CrossRef]

62. Sobotová, L.; Šafaříková, S.; González Martínez, M.A. Sport as a tool for development and peace: Tackling insecurity and violence in the urban settlement Cazucá, Soacha, Colombia. *Qual. Res. Sport Exerc. Health* **2016**, *8*, 519–534. [CrossRef]

63. Blom, L.C.; Bronk, K.C.; Sullivan, M.; McConchie, J.; Ballesteros, J.; Farello, A. Peace and development indicators in Liberia youth through sport for development programming. *Peace Confl. J. Peace Psychol.* **2020**. [CrossRef]

64. Krasniqi, S.; Krasniqi, B. Sport and peacebuilding in post-conflict societies: The role of Open Fun Football Schools in Kosovo. *J. Aggress. Confl. Peace Res.* **2019**, *11*, 145–157. [CrossRef]

65. Malnati, A.H.; Spellings, C.R.; Al-Aseer, J.A.; Huffman, A.M.; Korsakas, P.; Hillyer, S.J. Contextual and individual factors influencing the implementation effectiveness of sport for development and peace programmes: A comparative case study of conflict relief in Lebanon and Ukraine. *Qual. Res. Sport Exerc. Health* **2016**, *8*, 535–553. [CrossRef]

66. Richards, J.; Foster, C. Sport-for-development interventions: Whom do they reach and what is their potential for impact on physical and mental health in low-income countries? *J. Phys. Act. Heal.* **2013**, *10*, 929–931. [CrossRef]

67. Caplan, R.; Caplan, R.D.C. *International Governance of War-Torn Territories: Rule and Reconstruction*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 2005.

68. O'Driscoll, D. *Post-Conflict Reconstruction Good Practice*; K4D Helpdesk Institute of Development Studies: Brighton, UK, 2018.

69. Forde, S.D. Fear and loathing in Lesotho: An autoethno graphic analysis of sport for development and peace. *Int. Rev. Sociol. Sport* **2015**, *50*, 958–973. [CrossRef]

70. Hasselgård, A.; Straume, S. Sport for development and peace policy discourse and local practice: Norwegian sport for development and peace to Zimbabwe. *Int. J. Sport Policy Politics* **2014**, *7*, 1–17. [CrossRef]

71. Collison, H.; Darnell, S.; Giulianotti, R.; Howe, P.D. Sport for social change and development: Sustaining transnational partnerships and adapting international curriculums to local contexts in Rwanda. *Int. J. Hist. Sport* **2016**, *33*, 1685–1699. [CrossRef]
72. Sugden, J. Critical left-realism and sport interventions in divided societies. *Int. Rev. Sociol. Sport* **2010**, *45*, 258–272. [CrossRef]
73. Höglund, K.; Sundberg, R. Reconciliation through sports? The case of South Africa. *Third World Q.* **2008**, *29*, 805–818. [CrossRef]
74. Bairner, A. Sport, the Northern Ireland peace process, and the politics of identity. *J. Aggress. Confl. Peace Res.* **2013**, *5*, 220–229. [CrossRef]
75. Dobbins, J.; Jones, S.G.; Crane, K.; DeGrasse, B.C. *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building*; Rand Corporation: Santa Monica, CA, USA, 2007.