



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Sport Management Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/smr



LGBTQ parents' experiences of community youth sport: Change your forms, change your (hetero) norms

Dawn E. Trussell^{a,*}, Laura Kovac^a, Jen Apgar^b

^a Brock University, 1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way, St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1, Canada

^b Community Engagement Facilitator, ON, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 July 2016

Received in revised form 22 March 2017

Accepted 24 March 2017

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Children

Community

Diversity

Family leisure

LGBTQ

Social media

Youth sport

ABSTRACT

This interpretive study sought to critically examine lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) parents' experiences of community organized youth sport. Using a constant comparative method of data analysis, the authors examined perspectives of participants from Australia, Canada, and the United States. Three emergent themes best reflected the parents' experiences: (a) anticipating sexual stigma and finding accepting communities; (b) confronting assumptions of heterosexuality; and (c) educating but not flag waving. Emphasis is placed on the parents intersecting social identities and notions of privilege (e.g., socio-economic resources and the ability to live in socially progressive areas), and how it altered their experiences within the community youth sport context. The findings call attention to the responsibility of youth sport organisations to create a climate of social change through inclusive language, behaviours, and program design.

© 2017 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Community youth sport has been a topic of considerable research in recent years, demonstrating the social, psychological, and physical benefits of participation (e.g. Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2016). Consequently, it represents a large segment of the sport industry (Warner, Dixon, & Leierer, 2015), and a central part of the daily lives of many families (Messner & Bozada-Deas, 2009). One important stakeholder to consider in the design and management of community youth sport programs is the parent, whom surprisingly, is overlooked among sport management scholars (Warner et al., 2015). The gendered dimensions of parental involvement in community youth sport have garnered some attention (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003; Messner & Bozada-Deas, 2009; Messner, 2009; Thompson, 1999; Trussell & Shaw, 2012); yet, the multiplicity and complexity of parental experiences within the heteronormative sporting culture remains largely unexplored. This is surprising considering the potential influence of sexual stigma and prejudice in community youth sport, and the implications on the experiences of parents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ).

Although there is limited research on parents who identify as LGBTQ in community youth sport, we can garner a sense of the potential significance of these experiences in their lives. Indeed, sport environments have been found to be unwelcoming and sometimes arguably hostile environments for athletes with LGBTQ identities (Satore & Cunningham, 2009a, 2009b). Numerous studies have documented how LGBTQ athletes are marginalized through subtle and overt stigmatisation, as well

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: dtussell@brocku.ca (D.E. Trussell).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2017.03.003>

1441–3523/© 2017 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

as the perceived or real threat of discrimination (e.g., Carless, 2012; Cunningham, 2015a). Research on athletes' lives point to adverse outcomes of sexual stigma and prejudice such as negative psychological effects (e.g., low self-esteem, low confidence, high stress), as well as the disruption of team dynamics (Oswalt & Vargas, 2013). Further, research on heterosexual parents' attitudes towards gay and lesbian coaches suggests that some parents have a negative view of diverse sexual identities and are unwilling to permit their "kids to play for anyone who is openly immoral" (Satore & Cunningham, 2009a, p. 109). There is evidence, however, of improved social attitudes that demonstrate growing inclusivity, greater acceptance of LGBTQ identities, and a sense of decreasing cultural homophobia within the sporting context (e.g., Adams & Anderson, 2012; Norman, 2013).

Although speculation might suggest that parents who identify as LGBTQ are reluctant to support their children's participation in environments wherein they might have felt marginalized as athletes, there is limited evidence to support this assertion. There is also limited understanding of the program qualities that parents' who identify as LGBTQ may be attracted to when seeking inclusive youth sport organisations for their children. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to understand the complexities of diverse family structures within community-based youth sport organisations, notably for families with LGBTQ parents. Specifically, we sought to understand the parents' experiences of the design and management of community youth sport programs. This research advances insights on parental experiences on youth sport by exploring diverse LGBTQ social identities. It also advances insight on the everyday experiences of sexual stigma within community sport, particularly as much of the research has focused on educational based settings (physical education classes; college and universities) or professional sport (e.g., Cunningham, 2015a; Norman, 2013; Satore & Cunningham, 2010). This research offers practical insight into the initiatives, programs, and adaptations organized youth sport service providers could consider to help meet the needs of diverse family structures.

2. Sport and diverse sexual identities

2.1. Theoretical concepts of sexual stigma, heterosexism, and prejudice

Sport has long been thought of as an institution that privileges male hegemony (e.g. Fink, 2008, 2016), through homophobic discourses (e.g. Carless, 2012) that create mechanisms of social exclusion. Drawing on Essed's (1991) work related to everyday racism, Norman (2011) proposed the concept of everyday gendered homophobia and its application to the sporting context. Within this system, daily injustices are constructed and reproduced through "thoughts, actions and processes that contribute and maintain a system in which heterosexism prevails" (p. 713). The concept of everyday gendered homophobia "links the narratives of day-to-day experiences of discriminations and prejudices to the wider structural context in which these inferiorizations take place" (p. 713). Embedded within sport organisational cultures, these narratives may be bound in subtle and taken-for-granted values, policies, norms, and behaviours (Cunningham, 2015a; Fink, 2008).

Although commonly used, one criticism of the homophobia construct is that it is too expansive, which leads to a reduction in its "utility for researchers and practitioners" (Herek, Gillis & Cogan, 2015, p. 18). In the mid- to late 2000's Herek, developed a unified conceptual framework that centered on the concepts of sexual stigma and sexual prejudice. As summarized in Herek et al. (2015): "This framework starts from a cultural analysis of how sexuality is socially constructed and how social categories based on sexuality reflect power and status inequalities" (p. 19). According to this framework, sexual stigma can be defined as shared social knowledge that LGBTQ behaviours, identity, relationships, or communities have a devalued status relative to heterosexuality. Sexual stigma is legitimated and perpetuated through dominant ideologies and "heterosexism is an ideology that is embodied in institutional practices" (p. 19). Heterosexism works to the disadvantage of individuals who identify as LGBTQ with the overriding belief that these social identities are inferior (Herek, 2009). Moreover, the cultural ideology of heterosexism exists even "in the absence of individual prejudice or discrimination" (p. 21).

At an individual level, Herek et al. (2015) write that, regardless of one's sexual orientation, sexual stigma is manifested in at least three ways: enacted stigma, felt stigma, and internalized stigma. Enacted stigma includes expressed behaviours and actions ranging from avoidance to violence (e.g., shunning, ostracism, overt discrimination) and both groups (heterosexuals and LGBTQ) can perpetuate enacted stigma. Moreover, heterosexuals and LGBTQ individuals can be targets of enacted stigma as anyone can be perceived as LGBTQ.

Felt stigma can be defined as an individual's awareness of the likelihood that they will be the target of stigma and can motivate individuals who identify as heterosexual or LGBTQ to use self-presentation strategies to avoid being labelled or to chronically conceal or deny their identities (Herek et al., 2015). According to Herek (2009), since individuals are inclined to avoid stigmatisation, felt stigma is often a pervasive and persistent problem that can play an increasingly larger role in shaping the experiences of stigmatised groups compared to enacted stigma.

The third concept of internalized sexual stigma manifests when a LGBTQ or heterosexual individual accepts sexual stigma as a part of her or his own value system. As Herek et al. (2015) contend: "For heterosexuals, internalized stigma is manifested as negative attitudes toward sexual minorities, which are referred to here as *sexual prejudice*" (p. 20, emphasis in the original). For individuals who identify as LGBTQ, internalized sexual stigma may manifest through negative attitudes towards other LGBTQ individuals, and more commonly, negative attitudes that are harboured towards themselves in what is referred to as self-stigma.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6576142>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6576142>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)