Crime reduction and community safety

Research in this section is divided broadly into three main categories: aggregate analysis of the relationship between sports participation and crime; research on programmes seeking to use sport with 'at-risk' populations to prevent crime (diversion); programmes that use to sport (and various types of outdoor activities) to rehabilitate offenders.

Caruso offers an economic definition of sport participation as a combination of (i) a market good, (ii) a relational good and (iii) an expression of threat, power and coercion, with (ii) needing to be positive. Data from Italian regions are used to illustrate negative associations between sport participation and property crime; negative associations between sport participation and juvenile crime and a weak positive association between sport participation and violent crime.

The material on 'at-risk' populations contains three reviews of existing research. Coalter outlines the various theories of sport's 'therapeutic' functions and examines related research findings. He suggests that there is a need for a better understanding of the nature of the processes of participation which might lead to reduced criminality and that this would enable sports programmes to be proactive in managing for outcomes. He concludes that sport appears to be most effective as part of broader developmental programmes and that sport's salience for many young people enables it to attract them to such programmes. Morris et al's review also concludes that effectiveness is increased greatly by the integration of sports programmes with community support services. They also propose that the nature of the activity may not be as important as the social processes involved. West and Crompton's review of research on the impact of adventure programmes for at-risk youth illustrates that some achieved significant positive changes in self-concept and reduced recidivism. However, because of a range of methodological limitations, they give only tentative support to the effectiveness of such programmes.

In terms of diversionary programmes, the Cap Gemini Ernst and Young evaluation of the Splash programme found small, but significant, reductions in recorded crime for some of the programmes (although many of the schemes also included a range of developmental components). The study of 24 Positive Futures programmes by Leisure Futures illustrates a general reduction in both perceived and recorded local crime and 'nuisance behaviour' during the period of the programmes. However, the authors caution that the impacts varied between individuals and, as with other programmes, Positive Futures appeared to work best in partnership with other projects (especially youth services). Farrell et al report on a survey of participants in the Milwaukee Midnight Basketball League (which includes educational components) and conclude that the majority had experienced positive changes to both attitude and behaviour.

Nichols and Taylor found that a sports counselling project led to lower recidivism than a control group, that success was related to the length of the programme and the programme elements which contributed to this success include voluntary participation, the skill of sports leaders and access to training courses. Wright et al report on a summer sports programme for youth-at-risk that provided a range of educational components aimed to develop positive self-perceptions across a range of areas. Compared to two control groups, the programme participants experienced significantly increased self-perceptions on a range of competences – scholastic, social and athletic (although no evidence is provided about subsequent behaviour). Andrews' and Andrews' conclusions about the use of sport for rehabilitation in a young people's secure unit reflect other research findings. They argue that for vulnerable young people traditional, competitive, sport will prove ineffective and that there is a need for minimal rules, a strong emphasis on fun, with programmes tailored to individual needs. McKenney and Dattlio also argue for a more cooperative and educative approach. They report on the limited impacts of an intensive basketball-coaching course (combined with a conflict resolution component) for males with disruptive behaviour disorder. Endresen and Olweus report on a large scale longitudinal study which illustrates that certain 'power' sports (e.g. weightlifting and boxing) can have 'enhancement' effects that encourage higher levels of anti-social behaviour (although the authors point to possible methodological limitations).

In terms of more general sports participation, Begg et al, in a large self-report study, found no significant association between sporting activity and aggressive behaviour or team sport participation and delinquency and aggressive behaviour. Consequently the authors reject the more simple versions of the hypothesis that sport has a deterrent impact on delinquent behaviour. Mutz and Baur illustrate that sports club participation does not automatically lead to a decrease or increase in self-reported violence and compared to powerful agents of socialisation sports clubs affiliation may be of marginal relevance. If such issues are to be addressed this will require specially designed interventions which combined sports-related aims with socially spirited objectives. Camire and Trudel explore the contribution of sports participation to self-assessed social (teamwork, perseverance, loyalty) and moral (honesty, sportsmanship, respect) development. They found that individual athletes were more likely to emphasise moral values, with team athletes emphasising social values. With regard to moral values, few reported learning about them via sport as they had been exposed to them in other life domains. The authors suggest that coaches need to undertake concrete and proactive initiatives to reduce gamesmanship and re-emphasise the moral character of sport.

Using longitudinal data, Hartmann and Massoglia argue that the level, intensity and type of athletic participation, the socio-institutional context in which sport occurs and peer group influences and interaction all influence the extent to which sports participation produces long term positive or negative behaviours. Moesch et al use social learning theory to suggest that different levels of self-reported violence among sports participants reflect a combination of gender, self-concept and different sports, although the issue of self-selection or sporting influence remains unresolved.

Rutten et al explored the socio-moral atmosphere environments of soccer and competitive swimming and concluded that those who experienced a favourable socio-moral environment and a positive relationship with their coach reported less anti-

social behaviour, although the effects were small. **Sagar et al illustrate that fear of failure mediates the impact of sports participation on antisocial behaviour in both sport and university. This fear of failure is deeply rooted in dispositions to self-evaluation and transfers across domains. Whereas males' fear is of important others losing interest, female fear relates to devaluing one's self-estimate.**

Much of the research is characterised by admitted methodological difficulties (e.g. lack of control groups; complex relationships between cause and effect; diversity in the measures used; lack of longitudinal research). To assist researchers to address some of these issues, Nichols and Crow identify three types of programmes, each of which are based on certain assumptions about sport – primary (environmental) and secondary (targeting 'at-risk' youth) prevention and tertiary (rehabilitation) programmes. They suggest that each requires different methods of evaluation, although these approaches should be based on a realist approach, using logic models which outline programme assumptions.

Although there is a substantial body of research in this area, there is a widespread acceptance that more rigorous research designs are required to inform both policy and practice. Such research would include:

- The use of control groups when evaluating the impact of both diversionary and rehabilitative programmes.
- Longitudinal studies (especially of rehabilitative programmes) to assess longer term impacts.
- The nature of the relationship between activity and process and various 'success factors' e.g. location, length of programme, inter-personal relations, the type of activity, the nature and content of associated personal and social development programmes.
- The possibility that certain sub-cultures and delivery processes in certain sports may encourage or reinforce anti-social behaviour.
- The nature of participants' orientation - mastery or ego - and the impact on programme effectiveness.
- The ability of different types of programmes to develop various 'protective factors' (positive attitudes; ability to work with others; sense of belonging; conflict resolution).

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Added to the Value of Sport Monitor in January 2012:

Caruso, R (2011) Crime and sport participation: evidence from Italian regions over the period 1997-2003, *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 40, 455-463

Sagar, S., Boardley, I., and Kavussanu, M. (2011) Fear of failure and student athletes' interpersonal antisocial behaviour in education and sport, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 81, 391-408