

Psychological Mechanisms Underlying Morality in Sport

Sport is believed to promote prosocial values, such as fair play and sportsmanship (Shields & Bredemeier 1995). However, sport can also promote anti-social behaviors, such as cheating and gamesmanship (Kavussanu 2019). Experiences of antisocial behaviors can have negative consequences for participation in sport and limit opportunities of effectively using sport as a vehicle to develop an athlete's morality. Therefore, understanding the factors that lead athletes to engage in prosocial and antisocial behaviors is important in our efforts to create a psychologically healthy sport environment. In this symposium, we discuss the results of five cross-sectional studies from data collected in France, Italy, Turkey and the United Kingdom, which have relevance to the development of morality in sport. The first paper discusses the relationship between basic psychological needs and prosocial and anti-social behaviors of athletes. The second paper investigates how sport coaches can create motivational climates that engage and disengage prosocial and antisocial behaviors. The third paper presents data relating to collective moral disengagement within team sports and its influence toward promoting anti-social behaviors. The fourth paper examines the role of fear of failure in promoting anti-social behaviors, such as doping. The final paper discusses the implications achievement goals, basic psychological needs and passion have in the development of antisocial behaviors. The symposium will conclude with an evaluation of all five studies and their implications for understanding how psychological mechanisms underlying moral development are manifested in sport.