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Ableism as a regulator of social practice and disabled peoples' self-determination to participate in sport and physical activity

Ian Brittain, Rui Biscaia and Simon Gérard (Coventry University)

Abstract

Building on the theories of ableism, social practice and self-determination, this article proposes a framework to aid explaining why disabled people (DP) are less likely to access and participate in sport and physical activity (S&PA). We argue that ableism acts as a regulatory mechanism for each of the elements (habitus, capital and field) and different forms of capital (social, cultural, economic and symbolic) of Bourdieu's concept of social practice. In addition, we argue that this regulation of social practice also impacts the possibility for DP to self-determine their access to and participation in S&PA due to their perceived competence, autonomy and relatedness. In turn, we also acknowledge that ableism can impact directly upon self-determination and that social practice within the arena of S&PA may reinforce ableist perceptions.

Key Words: Ableism; Disabled People; Social Practice; Social Capital; Self-Determination; Sport and Physical Activity.

Introduction

Disabled people (DP) face multiple environmental and attitudinal barriers to sport participation (Brittain, 2004), and are often less physically active than non-disabled people (NDP) (Hoekstra, 2018). The importance of increasing the levels of sport and physical activity (S&PA) amongst DP has been regularly highlighted (c.f. Darcy & Dowse, 2013) due to the associated physical, mental (health) and social benefits. This has been a generalised concern globally, particularly with the advent of human rights legislation such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which includes an article (30) that guarantees the right for DP to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (United Nations, 2006). This social model of disability-based approach has broadened the understanding of the issues faced by DP in the wider society. However, what has been lost is an understanding that disability only really occurs when these barriers are socially imposed (Thomas, 2004).

According to Saxton (2018), modern day understandings of disability have their roots in Western eugenic policies of the 1890s that “drew upon the notion of the able body as a cultural signifier of not only beauty and function but also of traits of ‘human goodness’, such as acceptability, normality and worthiness” (p.24). McClennen (2019) argues that this underscores the modern concept of disability, which she claims is a by-product of capitalism. Goodley (2014) further claims that such normative values mean that “dis/ability, neoliberalism and capitalism feed upon one another’s existence” (p.52) and points out that “those bodies that fail to meet the debilitating impacts of labour will be impoverished not only economically but also psychologically” (p.52). Therefore, to be ‘disabled’ in the current era is to be a worker who is unable to sell their labour (McClennen 2019), particularly when ‘all liberal capitalist democracies are structured by power and run for the benefit of particular groups’ (Oliver & Barnes, 2012, p.78). As such, the concept of ‘disability’ is a form of social oppression of people with impairments that maintains itself through a mixture of structural, psycho-emotional and

economic dimensions that have become part of everyday, almost sub-conscious, social practices for many within society that may leave some DP feeling worthless and ashamed (Reeve, 2006).

To increase the levels of S&PA among DP it is vital to understand the factors that drive and constrain such social practice. Previous studies have drawn out the links between the body, barriers and personal factors (e.g. Darcy, Lock, & Taylor, 2017; Groff, 2009; Jeffress & Brown, 2017), and have used elements of the Bourdieusian theory of social practice to examine sport participation among various groups (e.g. Andersen & Bakken, 2018) or in the area of Paralympic and disability sport (e.g. Purdue & Howe, 2015). However, to our knowledge, what is missing is an explanation of the mechanisms by which social practice is regulated (and social oppression maintained) such that it impacts upon opportunities for participation in S&PA by DP and allows for social closure (Patillo, 2008) by dominant groups (e.g. NDP). Patillo (2008) defines social closure as the establishment and sustenance of boundaries formed by the group that dominates a particular field in an effort to keep out potential newcomers. As noted by Saxton (2018), it is now important to focus on the larger society as the arena where exclusion may occur to better understand the mechanisms that regulate S&PA, thus leading to a wider engagement and creating the foundation for personal empowerment of DP.

Ableism has been suggested as a useful lens to investigate the participation of DP in S&PA (Giese & Ruin, 2018). Ableism encompasses both the impact of the environment and societal attitudes as forms of social oppression that can lead to barriers to participation. It also lends 'support to economic and material dependence on neoliberal and hyper-capitalist forms of production' (Goodley, 2014, p. 21) that have the potential to compound these environmental and attitudinal barriers. In this sense, ableism may act as a regulatory mechanism that impacts upon social practice (i.e. habitus, capital and field; Bourdieu, 1986) through multiple ways to both maintain power by the dominant NDP within society, as well as maintain the social

oppression of DP. In addition, the self-determination of DP has been highlighted as a contributing factor to whether they participate in S&PA or not (Saebu, Sørensen, & Halvari, 2013). Thus, one may argue that when ableism is operated as a regulatory mechanism upon social practice it will likely impact the self-determination of DP to engage in S&PA, and that ableism (and internalised ableism) may be reinforced through the self-determination process.

Whilst extant research has contributed to our understanding of the barriers faced by DP in accessing and participating in S&PA, to date no comprehensive model has been created to provide a global understanding of how these barriers are maintained and how this access is regulated. Such a model is vital to address calls for more research about disability in sport and leisure environments (e.g. MacBeth, 2010), and act as starting point to promote the empowerment of DP through their increased engagement in S&PA. Thus, the aim of this paper is to propose a model to aid in providing an explanation as to why DP are less likely to engage in S&PA by linking the theories of ableism (Campbell, 2009), social practice (Bourdieu, 1986) and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

Four key issues are important to outline in the construction of this paper. Firstly, the term DP is used throughout, rather than a person-first approach as this term is often used by DP themselves to denote they are disabled by a world that is not equipped to allow them to participate and flourish (McColl, 2019) making them less likely to be physically active. Secondly, although it needs to be stressed that DP are not a homogenous group with visibility, types, time of onset and levels of impairment and support needed, in terms of attitudes amongst NDP they are often lumped together under the banner heading of 'the disabled' (Oliver, 1995). Therefore, whilst understanding the heterogeneity and diversity of DP our aim is to highlight the potential implications of non-disabled attitudes within society upon the lives of DP, whilst at the same time acknowledging that the impacts of these attitudes will vary greatly from individual to individual. Thirdly, whilst acknowledging the issues connected with taking a

binary approach (c.f. Areheart 2010; Eckert 2014), this paper focusses upon the dichotomy between DP and NDP to highlight the social origins of many of the issues faced by DP in much the same way the social model of disability uses the dichotomy between disability and impairment. Finally, we acknowledge that DP are not without agency in resisting and challenging ableist perspectives the same way as the social model of disability was, and still is, used to challenge the medical model perspective. Our aim with this paper is to highlight the potential damage that an ableist perspective may reek upon the lives of DP, particularly when trying to become involved in S&PA, if left unchallenged.

Access to Sport and physical activity for disabled people

Figure 1 depicts the proposed framework for understanding the linkages between ableism, Bourdieu's concept of social practice (habitus, capital and field) and self-determination of DP to access S&PA. We begin by outlining the key elements of ableism as a regulatory mechanism for DP on social practice within the arena of S&PA. Next, we highlight ableism's potential to regulate each of the elements (habitus, capital and field) and sub-elements (e.g. different forms of capital) of Bourdieu's concept of social practice. This is followed by a discussion of how this regulation might impact the possibility for DP to self-determine (i.e. competence, autonomy and relatedness) their access to and participation in S&PA. It is also acknowledged that ableism can impact upon self-determination and that social practice can reinforce ableist perceptions.

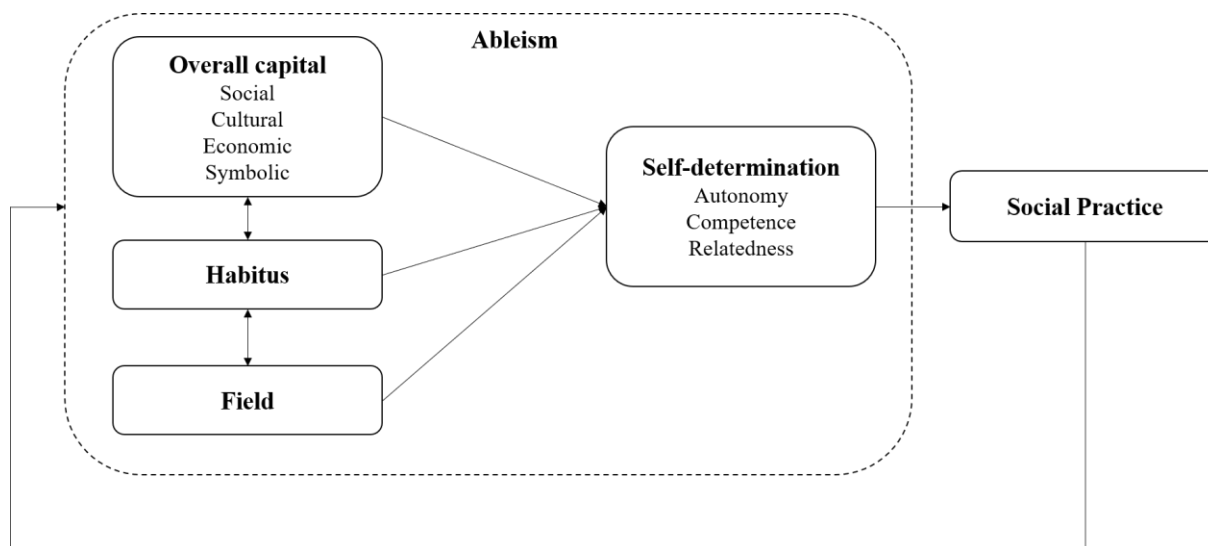


Figure 1. Proposed model to understand sport and physical activity participation amongst disabled people.

Ableism

Ableism has been the subject of extensive research focused on the way DP are treated within the wider society (Loja, Costa, Hughes, & Menezes, 2013). In the context of DP, “ableism describes prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviours toward persons with a disability” (Wolbring, 2012, p.78), which are related to one’s understanding of the ability and the rights and benefits afforded to persons deemed “normal”. Ableism is, therefore, associated with norms and normalcy and the resultant imposition of normative values for maintaining the power of one group over another (i.e. those who best fit the construed norms uphold power over those who diverge from them). Kearney, Brittain and Kipnis (2019) claim that:

While normalcy is existent in the background and is unobtrusive in everyday life for people meeting the established criteria of ‘normal’, for those perceived to deviate from the ‘norm’ it often exists in the foreground of their realities and is more prevalent in their perceptions of lived experiences within the social order (p.7).

The prioritisation of non-disabled S&PA and non-disabled bodies within society devalues this activity for DP and potentially undermines much of the work done by disability activists to gain acceptance for DP in all walks of life. Ableism, therefore, can act to devalue DP and result in segregation, social isolation, and social policies (e.g. current UK Government

‘Fitness for Work’ Assessments) that can limit opportunities for full societal participation for some DP. The two primary mechanisms through which this occurs are the ableist attitudes that nearly all people within society are socialised (to varying degrees) into (OHRC, n.d.) and an inaccessible environment (Nourry, 2018) that is generally designed with only those who most closely embody normative values in mind.

These two, combined with the strong links between ableism and capitalism (c.f. Oliver & Barnes, 2012) underpin the economic, structural and psycho-emotional oppression encountered on an almost daily basis by many DP. However, it should be acknowledged that DP’ own experiences and socialisation vary greatly, and that they are not a homogenous group. Indeed, Darcy et al. (2017) found that impairment effects were not uniform across disability types or level of support needs for any of the seven constraint factors (time, facilities/services, accessibility/financial, lack of partners, lack of knowledge, individual psychological, and lack of interest) that they highlight associated with participation in S&PA for DP. As such, the potential impact of ableism upon DP is not uniform, particularly given the heterogeneity not just amongst DP in general, but also amongst individual impairment groups. However, the impact of the oppression that comes with it still has a high potential to negatively impact on their lives, especially when compared to NDP.

Internalised Ableism

Based on this almost ubiquitous perception of disability as a pathological issue leading to a digression from a socially expected physical norm, both NDP and DP within society are encouraged, through numerous sources, to internalise many of the perceptions of disability embedded within an ableist approach to disability. Consequently, despite challenges to this perception by disability activists via the social model of disability, it appears to some DP that the causes of many of their problems lie within them and their own impairments (Brittain & Beacom, 2016). This leads to what Reeve (2014) terms ‘internal oppression’, or as more

commonly termed internalised ableism (Campbell, 2009). Within an ableist perspective, the existence of disability is often merely tolerated rather than celebrated as a component of human diversity and internalised ableism commonly forces some DP to assimilate ableist norms by assuming an identity other than their own (Campbell, 2008). Campbell (2009) further argues that internalised ableism operates a two-pronged approach: (i) dispersal (distancing of DP from each other); and (ii) emulation (whereby DP adopt and internalise ableist norms).

Reeve (2014) claims that “dispersal can be seen at work within hierarchies of impairment whereby disabled people position themselves relative to other disabled people” (p.95). This is highlighted by Deal (2003) who ranked different impairments by their degree of perceived social acceptability, which often relates with how far an impairment deviates from socially accepted norms. Dispersal, therefore, “actively promotes separation between and within groups of the so-called ‘stigmatised’ peoples” (Campbell, 2009, p.23). Emulation, which also appears to carry elements of dispersal within it, is described by Campbell as the compulsion to emulate ableist regulatory norms in order to give the appearance of being closer to the dominant norms than may actually be the case to try and fit in. However, it should be noted that this may be easier for some impairment groups than others, as the further they deviate from the socially accepted bodily norms the harder emulation will become.

According to Goodley (2014), ableism emphasises discrimination in favour of NDP (based upon ability), whereas disablism emphasises discrimination against DP (based upon ‘a failure to fit the capitalist imperative’ (p. xi)). The role of the social oppression we highlight above is, therefore, to both benefit those closely associated with the desired normative values and to marginalise those that differ from them through social closure (Patillo, 2008). In this framework, we highlight the dual impact of both ableism and disablism upon social practice and ultimately the ability of DP to self-determine their participation in S&PA. Therefore, we

use the term ableism throughout the paper, but our use of it is to encompass this duality rather than differentiate between the two.

Ableism and Bourdieu's theory of social practice

For Bourdieu (1984), social practices should be viewed as the main site of inquiry for social scientists in analysing social reality, which in his view “is a process of dialectic of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality” (p.72). Brar (2016) claims that Bourdieu's theory of practice is a social reproduction theory set within an economic framework. Social reproduction refers to the understanding of the process by which society is continuously reproduced “by different social classes based upon their control of various economic, political, and social structures in a manner that benefits some while marginalizing others” (p.2). Maton (2008) further argues that practice is the outcome of a combination of three further concepts put forward by Bourdieu – habitus, capital and field, which are all interlinked and illustrated with the equation $(\text{Habitus} \times \text{Capital}) + \text{Field} = \text{Practice}$ (Bourdieu, 1984, p.101). Below, we highlight how ableism may impact upon each of these three elements.

Habitus

According to Shilling (1996), “The Habitus is located within the body and affects every aspect of human embodiment” (p.129). Bourdieu's (1984) use of habitus, therefore, highlights how an individual's socialisation causes social rules and structures to become embodied frames of reference, which in turn influence their behaviour in a seemingly unconscious manner. This in turn impacts upon what individuals perceive can/cannot be achieved within particular areas of their lives. Part of this socialisation is the inculcation of bodily norms and the acceptance of “a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human” (Campbell, 2001, p.44). This not only applies to perceptions of NDP, who best

reflect this conception of the body, but also to DP through the process of internalised ableism described above. Marks (1999) claims that for DP internalised ableism:

is not the cause of our mistreatment; it is the result of our mistreatment. It would not exist without the real external oppression that forms the social climate in which we exist. Once oppression has been internalized, little force is needed to keep us submissive (p.25).

As stated earlier, internalised ableism produces two consequences for DP: distancing from each other and emulation of ableist norms (Campbell, 2008). The impact of this is that the type or degree of impairment of an individual can place one to be less or further divergent from the sociocultural 'norm' and lead to a hierarchy of impairment (Deal, 2003). That is, societies construe hierarchical ideals of 'acceptable' impairments (Smith, 2012). This helps explain why people with differing impairments may incur differing levels of problems trying to access S&PA (Darcy et al., 2017; Misener, 2015). An example of this would be that a single arm amputee would find it easier to enter a S&PA facility that has only steps for access than someone who uses a wheelchair. Also, it reiterates that an individual's socialisation (habitus) leads to the internalisation of social rules and structures that become embodied frames of reference that influence behaviour in a seemingly unconscious manner. Social classifications are, therefore, taken into an individual's habitus and shape how they react and relate to subsequent stimuli, events and people (Purdue, 2011). These classifications can either empower or disempower DP and, thus, regulate whether they decide to access S&PA, as well as the perceived quality of those experiences when they do participate (Jeffress & Brown, 2017).

Capital

Capital is defined as sums of money or assets put to productive use. Waquant (2006) claims that for Bourdieu "capital comes in three principal species: economic (material and financial assets), cultural (scarce symbolic goods, skills, and titles), and social (resources accrued by

virtue of membership in a group). A fourth species, symbolic capital, designates the effects of any form of capital when people do not perceive them as such” (p.267).

Economic Capital

Economic capital includes financial resources such as income, money or loans that play a key role on individuals’ ability to access social and cultural capital. Goodley (2014) states that “conception of the dis/abled body in the social must attend to the body’s materialisation in and through capitalism” (p.91) and that modes of ableist cultural reproduction and disabling material conditions can never be divorced from multiple modes of oppression, including capitalism. The current global economic climate is exacerbating the situation for DP, with Goodley (2014) stating that in the UK this has led to a severe narrowing of neoliberal definitions of disability to restrict access to state benefits (a form of social closure). Ryan (2019) further claims that DP in the UK are enduring “nine times the burden of cuts compared to the average citizen, with people with the most severe disabilities being hit a staggering nineteen times harder” (p. 3). Saxton (2018) states that DP tend to be associated with a low economic status, while Darcy et al. (2017) empirically verified that economic constraints are among the factors inhibiting DP from participating in S&PA. This, in turn, may increase the difficulties for DP to accumulate other forms of capital and helps maintain non-disabled dominance over all forms of capital, as well as the disempowerment of DP. In connection to the UK government benefits policies, the Activity Alliance showed that despite 83% of disabled research participants wishing to be more active, 43% were fearful of being seen to be more active in case they lose their benefits (Johnson & Spring, 2018). It would appear, therefore, that social and economic policies can, perhaps inadvertently, lead to further barriers to accessing S&PA and enhance social closure within this arena in favour of NDP.

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1986) distinguishes three types of cultural capital – embodied, objectified and institutionalised. Embodied cultural capital consists of both consciously acquired and passively inherited features that define ways of being and feeling, such as language, tastes, patterns of communication and behaviour. It is acquired over time, through socialisation. Although Bourdieu framed it mainly in terms of class distinctions, regarding ableism this is the area in which normative bodily values are transferred, translated, reinforced and in the case of DP themselves – internalised. Embodied cultural capital is, therefore, closely linked to Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and may adversely impact the self-efficacy of DP to participate in S&PA (Pensgaard & Sorensen, 2002).

Objectified cultural capital consists of physical objects owned and perceived as having material and economic value within society. Such items can be both sold for economic profit (provided others are willing to pay the price) or simply be used to convey ‘status’ and differentiating the owner from those that do not have access to the same level of (objectified) cultural capital. There are examples of DP achieving high level jobs (e.g. Wolfgang Schäuble, German Finance Minister; Sir Philip Craven, former President of the International Paralympic Committee). However, in general, a large proportion of DP are prevented from gaining the necessary economic capital that would allow them to gain access to objectified cultural capital, unless they are born into a family circumstance where it is already present (Scope, 2019). In reality, a large proportion of DP live at or below the poverty line (Batavia & Beaulaurier, 2001). This can make S&PA opportunities difficult for DP, especially if expensive adapted equipment is required or participation costs are high.

Institutionalised cultural capital consists of institutional recognition, often in the form of academic credentials or qualifications, of the cultural capital held by an individual (Bourdieu, 1986). However, for some DP, accessing this kind of capital is problematic, as access to education of any level is often difficult due to economic cost, but also because they

may be forced into segregated educational settings for fear of holding back the non-disabled students or due to access challenges to buildings or educational materials that prevents them from fully engaging with the educational process (Hanafin et al., 2007). Similar issues may arise where DP wish to take S&PA related coaching or officiating qualifications (Christiaens, 2018).

Social Capital

Social capital, derived through participation in sports and extended involvement with others in sports communities is an important benefit for DP that is often overlooked (Jeffress and Brown, 2017). Bourdieu (1986) conceptualises social capital as the resources that flow to individuals from their membership of social networks. According to Mithen et al. (2015), DP have lower social capital than NDP due to the inequitable power relations in the type of resources available to them through their social networks. By way of a partial explanation of this, DeFilippis (2001) states “people who realize capital through their networks of social capital do so precisely because others are excluded” (p.801). Mithen et al. further draw distinctions between three different types of social networks: bonding, bridging and linking. They define bonding networks as close informal networks of families and friends that are often regarded as a means to ‘get by’. Bridging networks tend to be weaker and heterogeneous ties between people from dissimilar backgrounds such as age or ethnic group with potential to generate resources not available through bonding networks and that enable people to ‘get ahead’. Finally, they define linking social networks as “relationships with those in positions of power and authority, which likewise offer the potential resources to ‘get ahead” (p.63). Many DP are often highly reliant on their bonding networks for the majority of their day-to-day needs, including accessing S&PA, as they may require them to provide transport assistance or support during the activity itself (Brittain, 2004). Bridging networks may include other individuals with which to participate in activities and whose reaction to the participation of DP participating may

determine whether that person returns or not (Brittain, 2004). Linking networks may include S&PA providers upon whom DP are dependent to provide accessible opportunities to participate (French & Hainsworth, 2001).

Ruff (2005) reports that the rise of neoliberal economics has led to the resurgence of the social Darwinist notion of “survival of the fittest.” This has the result of further strengthening the boundaries that define group membership and make accessing social and economic capital for DP even more difficult. Indeed, Chenoweth and Stehlik (2004) claim that for a large number of DP their difference (from social norms) and the ensuing disempowerment tends to limit them to bonding networks of immediate family members or paid professionals. Consistent with this view, Loja et al. (2014) note that ableist thoughts and practices annihilate access to all forms of capital for DP through the imposition of architectural and attitudinal barriers, with inaccessible public spaces (including S&PA facilities) curtailing opportunities to build the social relationships necessary to gain social capital. In addition, internalised ableism can also restrict opportunities to build social relationships through the process of dispersal (Reeve, 2014). This lack of access to social networks may lead to loneliness and social isolation (Cross, 2013). According to Cacioppo and Cacioppo (2014), this can, in turn, lead to a heightened sensitivity to social threats, as well as “impair executive functioning, sleep, and mental and physical well-being” (p.58). This highlights the importance and potential benefits of accessing S&PA by DP (Jeffress & Brown, 2017).

Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital is the summation of cultural and social capital that affords prestige and leads to others paying attention to an individual or group (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013). Using symbolic power against another individual or group implies a form of symbolic violence that may take such forms as judging the individual or group as inferior based upon the perception of their symbolic capital. In addition to preventing outsiders from entering a field and reaping

its rewards through social closure, this has the added effect of producing “opportunity hoarding” by members of the dominant group within a field (McKnight, 2015). According to Brar (2016), “opportunity hoarding is a deliberate process by which social closure enables the dominant group to disproportionately amass the available rewards in a particular field, thereby strengthening and entrenching their dominant position within that field” (p.66). This power may be dispensed without words through such actions as the continued construction of a built environment (including S&PA facilities) that is inaccessible to DP, which is both an exercise of power and a value judgement. That is, DP are not seen as important enough to be worth the perceived extra costs of making the necessary alterations. Symbolic capital engenders a sense of duty and inferiority in others who look up to those who have that power (Groleau & Rodriguez, 2009), which in the case of DP often takes the form of internalised ableism. In this sense, we posit that the mixture of symbolic violence and internalised ableism can act as a strong deterrent for some DP to become involved in S&PA, as well as other areas of social life.

The Field of sport and physical activity

Bourdieu (1984) uses the idea of field as a social arena where people compete for resources, making it a system of social positions based on structure in power relationships within that particular arena. In this article, the field is S&PA. The competition is for access to opportunities to take part and access the best and most relevant facilities in which to participate. S&PA provides many opportunities and benefits to DP. Aside from the physical benefits, S&PA has proven to be of psychosocial benefit for DP including increased empowerment, social capital, sense of belonging to a community and a better self-perception that positively contributes to psychological health (Jeffress & Brown, 2017). Conversely, S&PA may also have negative consequences for some DP. Shaw, Kleiber and Cadwell (1995) found that participation in S&PA may have both positive and negative effects on identity development of young men with disabilities, while Brittain (2004) emphasised that the field of S&PA may highlight DP's

deviation from bodily norms, thus reinforcing the idea that their bodily function is somehow inferior or less valued.

It should also be noted that negative interactions with NDP in a S&PA setting (e.g., staring, teasing and name calling) can act as a deterrent for NDP to participate alongside or be seen with DP. Martin (2010) reports that non-disabled children showed concerns of becoming victims of such teasing were they to play with a disabled child. In this way social closure is further maintained and the importance of being part of the dominant group reinforced. A summary of the impact of ableism on the elements that make up Bourdieu’s concept of social practice can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Impact of ableism on the various elements of Bourdieu’s social practice.

Social Practice	Impact of Ableism
<i>Overall capital</i>	
Social	Architectural and attitudinal barriers, particularly to social spaces, curtail opportunities to build social relationships. Internalised ableism restricts opportunities to build social relationships with others.
Cultural	
Embodied	Normative bodily values are transferred, translated, reinforced and internalised.
Objectified	Access to objectified cultural capital for DP is restricted due to lack of economic capital.
Institutionalised	Restricted access to either the educational process or the building or materials restricts opportunities to obtain cultural capital.
Economic	DP often excluded from educational and employment opportunities based upon ableist perspectives of what they can achieve or the negative impact they might have upon NDP in those settings.
Symbolic	Social closure used to establish and reinforce boundaries for dominant group leading to opportunity hoarding. Symbolic violence used to maintain boundaries.
<i>Habitus</i>	
	Ableism becomes an embodied frame of reference that impacts upon what DP believe they can and cannot do. Internalised ableism causes DP to distance themselves from each other.
<i>Field</i>	
	The field (S&PA) is predicated upon norms of physical perfection and optimum ability, which can exacerbate feelings of inferiority amongst DP. Symbolic violence maintains the boundaries ensuring that access to the best and most relevant facilities are reserved for those with more power.

To sum up, ableism is a socially constructed and construed conception of the value of certain abilities and/or characteristics over others. It is promoted by social groups and structures

that hold power within a field. Ableism is taught and reinforced through an individual's habitus and is used to regulate access to all forms of capital. This then makes operating and succeeding in a field such as S&PA more difficult for DP (c.f. MacBeth, 2009). In segregated S&PA settings this is a self-reinforcing process, as by separating DP from NDP they perform their disability (or their deviation from the dominant norm) in a separate, but visible space. This, in turn, reinforces the consequences of deviation from the dominant group norm and highlights the importance and benefits of the dominant group membership (Berezin, 2014). This leads to a perceived increase in the symbolic capital connected with being part of the group that most closely aligns with the normative values of the dominant group. In non-segregated settings DP run the risk of both making their impairment even more visible, and potentially being the victims of staring and rude comments that may deter them from future participation in S&PA.

Below, we elaborate on why ableism may operate as a regulatory mechanism upon social practice in the arena of S&PA, and how this may impact upon DP's ability to self-determine, whilst also acknowledging that ableism can impact and be reinforced directly through the self-determination process.

Self-determination

Self-determination theory (SDT) refers to the extent to which an individual has the freedom to be self-motivated or what Deci and Ryan (1985) describe as "the experience of freedom in initiating one's behaviour" (p.31). Self-determination, therefore, closely aligns with the idea of empowerment defined by Jeffress and Brown (2017) as "the transfer of power and control over decisions, choices, and values from external entities to the consumer of disability services" (p.236). A better understanding of how ableism influences self-determination has the potential, therefore, to highlight social mechanisms that can lead to the (dis)empowerment of DP. Hawkins et al. (2011) claim that self-determination is underpinned by three key constructs

(autonomy, competence and relatedness) that we outline below. Previous studies have highlighted that opportunities for self-determination are diminished by the presence of a disability (e.g. Shogren, Shaw, Raley, & Wehmeyer, 2018). Self-determination has been suggested to be a key factor in achieving individual goals, “making this construct, as it is practiced in mainstream society, an important example of cultural capital” (Trainor 2008, p.153).

Indeed, Condeluci et al. (2008) argue that practices supporting DP to expand their social networks are often recognized as effective ways to build social capital, which fosters both greater self-determination and improved life quality (Groff, 2009). Trainor (2008) further claims that although self-determination is often couched as a psychological construct located within the individual (i.e. the habitus), other factors located outside of the individual can also impact their experiences. Trainor concludes that the successful practice of self-determination requires both social and cultural capital. Citing Bourdieu (1986), Trainor states that all forms of capital can mediate the acquisition and use of power and, therefore, the connections between self-determination, empowerment, and the rights for DP. Thus, the successful practice of self-determination is closely associated with the notion of power. As outlined earlier, it is our contention that ableism is, in itself, an exercise in power and control. We now draw out links between the impact of an ableist discourse on three key areas of Bourdieu’s concept of social practice (habitus, capital and the field) and how these may lead to opportunities for DP to successfully self-determine, particularly in accessing S&PA. In table 2, we highlight links between the three key areas of self-determination (autonomy, competence and relatedness), Bourdieu’s concept of social practice and the regulatory role ableism may play for DP.

Table 2. Impact of Ableism and Bourdieu's Elements of Social Practice on DP' ability to self-determine

Social Practice	Self-determination		
	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
<i>Overall capital</i>			
Social	Reduced access to social networks decreases opportunities across all spheres of social life and restricts autonomous choice.	Reduction in autonomy through lack of access to social networks increases feelings of failure and lack of competence.	Reduced access to social networks, especially linking social networks, reduces connectedness/sense of belonging and increases social isolation.
Cultural			
Embodied	DP socialised through ableist practices into low self-perceptions of competence have lower sense of autonomy and a self-restriction of opportunities.	DP socialised through ableist practices internalise a sense of low self-competence through self-comparison.	Socialisation via ableist practices into externally imposed ableist normative values leads to a lack of connectedness to NDP and internalised ableism leads to dispersal from other DP.
Objectified	Restricted access to social capital restricts ability to accumulate objectified cultural capital, and opportunities to act autonomously.	Restricted access to social capital restricts ability to accumulate objectified cultural capital compounding feelings of failure and low self-competency.	The inability to connect with bridging and linking social networks restricts possibilities for opportunity hoarding and helps maintain social closure and power that comes with group membership.
Institutionalised	Lack of access to educational opportunities at all levels restricts opportunities to accumulate institutionalised cultural capital reducing autonomy of choice and opportunity.	Lack of access to educational opportunities at all levels reduces DP' feelings of competence and reinforces ableist perspectives of NDP towards DP.	Lack of institutionalised cultural capital can be a barrier to linking social networks where such capital is highly prized decreasing sense of connectedness and leading to increased social isolation.
Economic	Lack of access to economic capital restricts opportunities and choice, leading to a lessened sense of autonomy.	Failure to achieve economic capital leads to a feeling of failure and a reduced sense of competence.	Lack of economic capital reduces any sense of connectedness to, or even access to the networks of people with economic capital.
Symbolic	Autonomy is restricted via architectural and attitudinal barriers (via symbolic violence).	Lack of access to social and cultural capital combined with symbolic violence and internalised ableism leads to reduced self-perceptions of competence.	Social closure reduces opportunities to achieve any sense of connectedness, leading to social isolation.
<i>Habitus</i>	Low self-perceptions of competence lead to a lowered sense of autonomy and a self-restriction of opportunities.	Internalised ableism leads to a self-perceived sense of low self-competence.	Externally imposed ableist normative values lead to a lack of connectedness to NDP and internalised ableism leads to dispersal from other DP.
<i>Field</i>	Lack of accessibility to the field through an inaccessible environment, lack of choice/opportunity, cost and not feeling equally valued and welcome restricts autonomy and the ability to choose.	Self-comparison in terms of normative values and ability can lead to a lessened sense of competence and reinforce internalised ableism.	Self-comparison in terms of normative values and ability makes a sense of connectedness difficult to achieve, compounded by the reactions of NDP to obvious physical difference, reinforcing internalised ableism.

Autonomy

Autonomy is defined by Deci and Ryan (2002) as being the perceived origin or source of one's own behaviour. As noted by Ells (2001), autonomy is an important moral value that should be grounded on a theory of the self. In line with this and in response to a question from someone on Twitter who wanted to make a YouTube video on the misconceptions of disability, Tanni Grey-Thompson, British Paralympian, disability activist and member of the House of Lords replied that the "biggest misconception I experience is that I can't make my own decisions" (Grey-Thompson, 2019). In addition to impacting upon their sense of competence, this ableist perspective of the abilities of DP, and a belief that they are unable to do things for themselves, can erode the belief in autonomous control over their own actions. NDP making assumptions on behalf of DP takes away their autonomy and undermines their sense of self-competence. Autonomy is also decreased through symbolic violence that decreases access to both social capital and the field of S&PA through architectural barriers and negative attitudes to disability leading to a lack of participation opportunities (Brittain, 2004). For example, the ableist assumption by S&PA providers that DP are incapable or uninterested is often an excuse to not provide participation opportunities. This, in turn, negatively influences the habitus through internalised ableism and further lowers their ability to, and belief that they can, compete for resources. When children with disabilities in mainstream schooling are prevented from taking part in sport or physical education lessons by teachers who are either untrained or fearful to include them, this not only highlights the child with a disability's inability to question teachers' authority, but also begins the process of internalising that S&PA may not be for them. According to Coates and Vickerman (2016), "where opportunity lacks, motivation to participate in sport decreases" (p.352) assisting NDP to maintain control over the field of sport and the resources within it.

Competence

According to Deci and Ryan (2002), competence is defined as feeling effective in one's ongoing interactions with the social environment and experiencing opportunities to exercise and express capacities. This is an important aspect given that self-perceived competence and body image are commonly suggested to be related to sport participation (e.g., Richman & Shaffer, 2000). For example, Smith and Sparkes (2005) highlight that diverse narratives and different kinds of hope are used by DP to reconstruct their body-self relationships that can in turn impact upon competence self-perception. In addition, Stephens et al. (2012) highlight through what they term 'incidental learning' (p.2065) how participation in S&PA can assist with self-competence, empowerment and even in combatting internalised ableism.

Relatedness

Relatedness refers to the need to feel connected to others in the domain of physical activity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Coates and Vickerman (2016) further describe relatedness as "a person's feeling of shared experience and belongingness" (p.341). There is a strong link between relatedness and social capital as access to social networks and experiences of interactions within those networks will strongly impact upon an individual's sense of belonging within that network and their likelihood to maintain links (Zhao et al., 2012). The repercussions for participation in the field of S&PA are fundamental to the continued participation of DP, because sense of belongingness plays a key role in the sport domain (c.f., Spaaij, 2015). D'Eloia and Price (2018) point out that "persons lacking a sense of belonging within a setting can feel left out, ignored, and may be disinclined to participate" (p.93). Widdop et al. (2016) further claim that "social networks both facilitate and constrain sports participation" (p.596). We argue that the converse is also true – lack of provision and opportunity and an inaccessible environment act as a double barrier preventing DP from building social networks, whilst at the same time decreasing their motivation to participate. This forms just a part of the process of

social closure, discussed earlier, that maintains the dominance and benefits within the field of S&PA for those in a dominant position (i.e., NDP and organisers).

Overall, the impact of ableism upon social practice can lead for some (but not all) DP to a ‘perfect storm’ of issues that prevent their participation in S&PA by undermining their ability to self-determine through the partial removal of a sense of autonomy and competence and limiting access to social networks, thus taking away any sense of relatedness or belongingness. As noted by Misener (2015), the low levels of sport participation among DP are also reflective of low engagement in community life. This partially results from the application of the social oppression described by Thomas (2004) in the form of ableism that acts upon social practice to discriminate both in favour of NDP via social closure and opportunity hoarding and against DP by marginalising them from the economic and social opportunities necessary to thrive within modern society.

Conclusions and implications

Building on the theories of ableism, social practice and self-determination, this article proposes a framework to aid explaining why DP are less likely to access and participate in S&PA. We argue that ableism acts as a regulatory mechanism for each of the elements (habitus, capital and field) and different forms of capital (social, cultural, economic and symbolic) of Bourdieu’s concept of social practice. In addition, we contend that this regulation of social practice also impacts the potential for DP to self-determine their access to and participation in S&PA due to their perceived competence, autonomy and relatedness. In turn, we acknowledge that ableism can impact directly upon self-determination and that social practice within the arena of S&PA may also reinforce ableist perceptions.

Whilst the promotion of human rights appears to be an increasingly important aspect when bidding for and hosting sport mega events (McGillivray, Edwards, Brittain, Bocarro &

Koenigstorfer, 2019), the current framework elaborates on aspects limiting the access to and participation in S&PA by DP. This may act as a roadmap to help tackling this issue and guide future empirical research, whilst contributing to ensuring that their human rights are upheld. By better understanding the mechanisms by which exclusionary practices are maintained practitioners can be made more aware of the indicators of such practices and start the process of combatting them in order to better empower and include DP within S&PA. Consistent with this view, future research could develop a longitudinal examination of the proposed model by monitoring DP with different levels/types of impairment to further understand the potential dynamic linkages between ableism, social practice and self-determination, and help tackling the low levels of S&PA among DP. This may assist practitioners to find new ways to allow DP to freely access S&PA by highlighting ways that their ability to self-determine might be enhanced, ultimately aiming to empower them. Another research perspective would be to test to what extent this framework can be applied to a wider audience and shed new light on discriminatory practice-based dynamics around issues such as gender, class, age or sexual orientation and their intersections..

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