

Adolescent's in Sports: the All-Delinquent team

by

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## ABSTRACT

Analyzed through the lens of social-bond theory, this thesis examines the relationship between sports participation and delinquency among adolescents. The purpose of this thesis is to better understand whether sports can serve as an effective intervention strategy for policy makers, government agencies and criminal justice branches that deal directly with at risk-youth or offenders who can benefit from sports-related programs. Through the use of a meta-analysis methodological design, the findings uncovered through common literature will reflect the extent to which social-bond theory can sufficiently explain delinquency among athletes.

Traditionally, sports-participation and physical activity have been connected to prosocial stereotypes and the belief that adolescents will develop character-building morals. Although many situations including sports-participation are mainly positive across most facets, there is further evidence to suggest that unintended, antisocial-developing consequences can arise from participation in sports-related activities. Jock identity and unstructured socializing were highlighted as major factors for delinquency among athletes, whereas the pedagogical sports-environment serves as a possible deterrence model for delinquency. With further extensive research into this topic, the development of a pedagogical sports model can provide more athletes with an exceptional prosocial experience. Similarly, sports participation and sports-related intervention strategies can be utilized to address and combat youth-crime.

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## **GLOSSARY & ACRONYMS**

GSS - General Social Survey

SCC - Supreme Court of Canada

YCSI - Youth Crime Security Index



## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

### **I-1) Chapter Overview**

The key aim of this thesis is to investigate the relationship between delinquency and sports participation, by using the theoretical approach of social bond theory. There will be a methodology section discussing the methodological approach and research design of the thesis. There will also be a theoretical perspective section which will be examined in Chapter II. This chapter will begin by introducing the background of the thesis, then progressing to the research question. Following the research question will be the rationale and significance of the paper. Subsequently, the scope and structure will be discussed. Concluding the chapter will be a chapter summary.

### **I-2) Background**

Sports are everywhere, whether it's interscholastic school teams, club, academy, professional, minor-league or recreationally — sports are one of the world's primary sources of entertainment. As Coleman (1965) states, "if it were not for interscholastic athletics, or something like it, the rebellion against school, the rate of drop out, and the delinquency of boys might be far worse than they presently are" (as cited in Segrave, Moreau & Hastad., (1985), p.281). If sports participation can serve as a deterrent to delinquency, as much as it already fulfills a purpose as a source of entertainment, then studying this relationship seems necessary as a possible prevention strategy for youth crime and crime in general.

The key concepts throughout this thesis focus on delinquency, sports participation, social bond, adolescents and athletics. Through the use of a meta-analysis, I was able to sufficiently analyze studies and gather information that featured sport and delinquent related literature. The hope is that through positive social institutions, like sports participation,

adolescents might steer away from negative life choices, like crime and delinquency (Hirschi 1969; Purdy and Richard 1982 as cited in Veliz & Shakib, 2012, p.558).

### **I-3) Research Question**

*Do sports-based activities deter delinquency and serve as an effective intervention strategy for adolescents through the lens of social-bond theory?*

### **I-4) Rationale and Significance**

#### *I-4-a) Rationale*

Throughout history there have been a variety of theories, phenomenon's and studies used to try and explain the reasons individuals commit crime. Edwin Sutherland was one of the first and most influential theorists as he transformed sociological concepts into criminogenic explanations for deviance. One of most prominent and well-known criminological theories is 'Differential Association theory,' first developed by Sutherland. This theory suggests that through interaction with others, we can learn criminal values and behaviours, as a result of interacting with delinquent peers. Theories such as this sparked an idea, resulting in the development of this thesis. A new thought is that participation in activities, specifically sports-participation, offer positive environments for individuals to develop pro-socially and learn positive, character-building behaviours. In order to measure the accuracy of this idea, a meta-analysis research design was used. Comparing existing literature allowed for different perspectives and various theories to be used in order to test adolescence participation in sports, and it's effects on adolescent's rates of delinquency. A meta-analysis allowed for an increase in the overall sample size for this thesis, and the ability to study the effects of sports-participation of delinquency through other studies.

### *I-4-b) Significance*

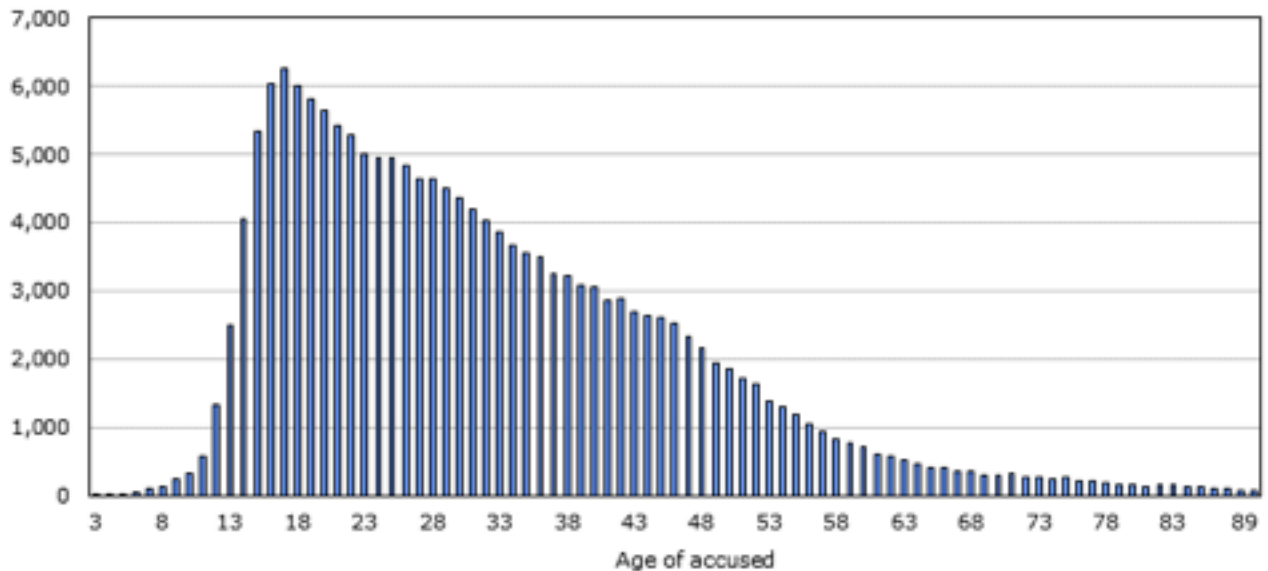
In 2017, the Youth Crime Severity Index (YCSI) reported an increase of 3% for youth accused (charged and not-charged). The YCSI is an index that measures both the volume and severity of crimes involving accused youths (Statistics Canada, 2018, p.1). This is reportedly the highest increase of youth crime since 2007. An increase of youth committed homicides, robbery, sexual assault (level 1) and sexual violations against children contributed heavily to the rise of youth reported crimes. These rates were offset by a decrease in attempted murder rates and break and enters.

When considering this increase of youth-related crimes, we must consider the possibility that something within society has prompted this sudden rise. According to the General Social Survey (GSS), the national participation rate of Canadian youth involved in sports aged 15 or older have been steadily declining since 1992. In 2010 there were a reported 26% of Canadians 15 years of age or older who were participating in sports. This percentage represents a 17% decrease since 1992 (Statistics Canada, 2013, p.8). As youth's time participating in sport and recreation decreases, they have more opportunity to engage in other activities, which can include delinquency.

According to the *Chart 4* on page 5, the age of individuals most frequently accused of committing a crime is 17. Furthermore, from the ages of 12 to 16, the rate of individuals accused increases per year with age until the age of 17, where it begins to steadily decline. This illustrates the common theme that “crime is a young person’s activity”, highlighting the importance of finding ways to deter delinquent and criminal behaviour by adolescents. If sports participation continues to decline and adolescent’s rates of accused continue to increase, there will be a pressing argument to investigate whether there is a strong correlation between the two.

**Chart 4**  
**Rate of persons accused, by age, 2014**

rate per 100,000  
population



**Note:** Rates are for all *Criminal Code* offences (excluding traffic). Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population at each age. Populations are based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Accused under age 12 cannot be charged with an offence under the *Criminal Code*.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Crime Reporting Survey, 2014.

## I-5) Scope and Structure

### *I-5-a) Scope*

This thesis explores literature regarding adolescents involved in athletics, and their subsequent proneness to delinquency. According to Statistics Canada (2016), youth are defined as ages 12-17 (p.1). For all intents and purposes, youth and adolescence will be categorized as the same group in this thesis. The ages of 12-17 are reflective of adolescents in junior high (middle school), and high school. The studies used for this thesis date back as far as 1985, to the most recent of 2018. These time frames were selected to provide disparity among results and observe if there were advancements in findings from older studies to recent regarding whether sports-related activity had any effect on delinquency tendencies. As far as where the studies were conducted, there was not enough Canadian literature to

conclude reliable findings on their own. Resultantly, the scope had to be broadened to American samples too.

#### *I-5-b) Structure*

To properly and accurately examine whether sports participation serves as a deterrent through the lens of social bond theory, a plethora of research articles were analyzed. This thesis was structured accordingly with the information that was collected. This section will clearly identify the following sections of the thesis and explain how they can improve the understanding of the relationship between sports participation and delinquency among youth. Following the introduction will be the literature review. The literature review's purpose is to review all of the new and old information collected from research articles. Within the literature review section, the main themes include; the theoretical approach, the history of sports participation and intervention, a comprehensive view of sports participation, and concluded with jock status and unstructured socializing.

After the literature review, the methodology and research design section will follow, concluded by the discussion. The methodology and research design section will explain the purpose of the choice of meta-analysis as the method for this thesis. This section will also explore how the data was analyzed as well as the selected research design for the thesis. Subsequently, the discussion section will address the research question, then examine the findings from the literature review and bring all the main themes together. Implications and suggested future research will also be discussed. Lastly, the conclusion section will reiterate key findings and reflect on any limitations encountered. The conclusion will provide a review of all chapters of the thesis, and comment on any major developments found that should be explored during future research.

## **I-6) Chapter Summary**

This section introduces the key concepts of this thesis; delinquency and sports participation. The background and rationale chapters acknowledge the importance of better understanding the dynamics between how adolescent's behaviours are affected by sports participation, particularly whether sports can contribute to combatting youth-crime. As youth crime rates have increased recently according to Statistics Canada, exploring reasons for this rise and methods of combatting it are important. The scope of the thesis examines adolescents aged 12-17, and is important to remember during the reading of this paper. The next section of this thesis will be the literature review, which will discuss the various findings and common themes among different sources of secondary research.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **II-1) Chapter Overview**

Since 2017, youth crime has been rising steadily in Canada. As Canada is experiencing an aging population of “baby boomers,” the youth of today will become the contributors of tomorrow at an accelerated pace. With this being said, policy makers, government agencies and various social programs have implemented several strategies throughout history in efforts to instil prosocial attitude into adolescents, while simultaneously limiting delinquent traits. One of the methods that has been widely recognized as a beneficial method for adolescent's character building is the use of sports participation. The wide-spread assumption is that as youth participate in prosocial activities and programs, they will associate with prosocial peers and learn beneficial values.

This literature review seeks to better understand the relationship between sports participation and delinquency among adolescents. Furthermore, Travis Hirschi's social bond theory will assist in providing a framework to measure the effectiveness of sports as a deterrent for antisocial behaviour. Previous research has been conducted using various criminological and sociological theories; however, less so through the lens of social bond theory.

A regular assumption regarding sports participation is that adolescents involved in sports and similar activities will experience a decrease in problematic behaviour, such as underage drinking and bullying, among other forms of delinquency. However, several articles suggest a controversial reality that sports participation can actually result in the unintended outcome of increased delinquency among youth.

This section will begin by discussing the theoretical approach, then transitioning to the history of sports participation and intervention. Following the history chapter, a comprehensive view into sport delinquency will be explained. Finally, t jock status and unstructured socializing will be analyzed, concluded by the chapter summary.

### **II-1-a) Overview of Theoretical Approach**

Social-bond theory was developed by Travis Hirschi in 1969 and has been selected as the theoretical approach for this thesis. Hirschi's control theory assumes that all individuals are predisposed naturally to committing crime, which is similar to Hirschi's other theory — the 'general theory of crime'. General theory of crime, otherwise known as self-control theory, suggests that low self-control is the root cause of all crime. These theories differ, however as social-bond theory suggests that conventional social bonds formed within an individual's life can prevent or reduce the likelihood of individuals committing criminal offences. Furthermore, Hirschi suggests that societal institutions such as schools, churches, teams, family and clubs can exert control over individual's impulses to commit crime.

Hirschi originally outlined the basis for his social bond theory in his 1969 book *Causes of Delinquency*. Social bond theory stems from Emile Durkheim's earlier thesis regarding social connections. Hirschi then refined the theory, arguing the stronger a person's bond with another individual or society, the greater their "stake in conformity" will be (Fox, 2008, p.1). Specifically, the stronger the social bond between individual to individual, or individual to society, the lesser the likelihood of an individual committing a criminal offence (Tibbets, 2019, p.174-175). The theory encompasses four key elements of the (social) bond: attachment, commitment, involvement and belief.



According to Tibbets (2019) attachment is the most important bond of the four and is essential for the internalization of conventional values (p.175). Attachment refers to an existing connection between two individuals, or the bond between an individual and society. The stronger the bond between the two parties, the more compelled the individual will be to behave in a moral fashion. This is why during adolescence, peer groups are the most influential on an individual's life. If the attachment between an individual and their peer is stronger than not, the greater the influence their peer's behaviour will have on them.

The second element of social bond theory is commitment. Commitment can be defined as the investment someone has in conventional society. This suggests individuals will weigh what is at risk if they were to be found guilty of a crime. In other words, if people feel as though they have more to lose than gain by committing crime, they are less likely to engage in delinquency. Likewise, if an individual has less invested in conventional society, their likelihood to commit crime increases, as they feel there is less for them to lose (Tibbets, 2019, p.175-176).

Involvement, the third element of social bond theory, refers to the time someone has invested in conventional work, activities and pastimes. Hirschi claims this participation in conventional activities resultantly reduces the time remaining for individuals to participate in unconventional, law-breaking behaviour. People try to deter delinquency through participation in programs, sports, clubs, and activities provided by social institutions, such as schools or churches. The rationale for this is to keep individuals more involved in meaningful activities, especially during adolescence (Moyer, 2001, p.149).

The final component of social bond theory is belief. This element refers to moral beliefs concerning the laws and rules of society. In essence, individuals who feel that a course of action is against their moral beliefs are far less likely to pursue that action compared to

individuals who do not see a breach of morality in those same behaviours (Tibbets, 2019, p. 176). For example, the view on marijuana usage reflects the concept of belief. Many individuals previous to legalization of marijuana negatively stigmatized it as immoral, whereas others did not view it is immoral.

### *II-1-a) Sports-participation and Theoretical Approach*

History shows that many theorists and theories associate sports participation with the deterrence of delinquency. Although these theories don't suggest sport activities directly reduce delinquency, they instead argue the learning opportunities and prosocial bonds of peers within the sports context can prevent delinquent behaviour (Spruit, van der Put, van Vogt & Stams 2018, p.1536). Socialization theories such as; Hirschi's social bond theory, social learning theory, and differential association all emphasize that the influences within an individual's social and environmental situation are critical with regards to whether they learn prosocial or antisocial behaviour. Hence why sports interventions strategies have begun to be implemented through various organizations and communities.

Several scholars have suggested that through sports and extra-curricular activities, youth learn to obey rules and authority, learn morality and skills focused on dealing with self-control, and resolving conflicts (Spruit et al., 2018, p.1536). Therefore, practicing these skills with other youth who are challenged to do the same is believed to protect adolescents from delinquent temptations. From a social bond perspective, Agnew & Peterson (1989) suggest that sports participation strengthens social bonds to society, which in turns reduces delinquent behaviour (as cited in Spruit et al., 2018, p.1536). For example, when individual's participate in sports, they become members of a team — strengthening their social bond with their community. Even in individual-based sports, they are part of a larger community and must

abide by the same rules and standards. Teams are supervised by coaches and other sport agents, resulting in increased social bonds between youth with their peers and coaches. By becoming involved and committed to conventional activities, individuals are more likely to refrain from delinquent acts that potentially jeopardize their opportunity to participate in sports. It is expected that risk factors such as low self-control and antisocial behaviour will be reduced through attachment, commitment and investment. Subsequently, prosocial attitudes such as positive peer interaction and other protective factors will be promoted (Dishion & Tipsord, 2011 as cited in Spruit et al., 2018, p.1537).

## **II-2) History of Sports Participation and Intervention**

In 1896, the world experienced its first ever taste of an international Olympics. This event included countries competing in different sporting events in order to determine who was the best in the world in their respective fields. This tradition has continued for over a century, still existent in our society today. Originally, Greece held this event exclusively in their own country from 776BC to at least 393AD (Olympic Games, 2019, para. 5) — serving as the cultural, social and sporting highlight for each century in Greece. Now the event has become the most significant sporting event internationally.

Although sporting events, such as the Olympics, traditionally award athletes with medals for finishing events in the top three, some scholars suggest that sports were not originally intended for achievements and physical activity — rather, sport-activities were intended to enhance moral development (Taylor, Nanney, Welch & Wamser-Nanney, 2016, p. 318). This idea is supported by a number of other scholars. For example, Fox (1997) found that in western cultures, physical self-worth and physical attractiveness are all particularly salient. Moreover, participation in physical activity and sports can improve various skills,

provide health benefits and enhance physical-self perceptions, which in turn can actually improve individual's self-esteem among both men and women (as cited in Faulkner et al., 2007, p.156). Self-esteem is considered significant because the results from Faulkner et al (2007) determined that lower levels of self-esteem were linked to delinquency among youth. Findings such as these spark the discussion as to whether participation in sports activities and sports intervention can deter delinquency among adolescents.

According to Spruit et al., (2018), in the mid-19th century the British introduced sports participation in public schools to try and stimulate positive character development among adolescents. Character development included: confidence building, becoming more self-reliant and increasing the adolescent's responsibilities (p.1535-1536). However, only within the last several decades have youth policy makers began to shift towards an effort in using sports as a means of preventing juvenile delinquency.

### *II-2-a) Sports-participation as an Intervention Strategy*

In the 1990's the United States experienced a transformation in their approach to crime prevention. Sports and recreational programs became popular methods for crime prevention, particularly for at-risk and minority populations (Hartmann & Depro, 2006, p. 180). Furthermore, Witt & Crompton (1997) noted that 621 pilot programs were identified in the U.S that specifically focused on reaching at-risk youth (as cited in Hartmann & Depro (2006, p.181). Now, dozens of programs such as; the YMCA, girls and boys club, and other new innovative and revamped models are being used across every metropolitan city in the U.S.

In Canada, a similar shift in crime prevention strategies occurred, as evidenced by identical programs being formed — in particular, the YMCA and the boys and girls club.

Recently however, there has also been a serious effort by law enforcement agencies to become more involved in community crime prevention programs. For instance, the Calgary Police Service (2018) have been operating a free weekly drop in hockey program for the last several years, known as the “power play hockey program.” This program operates annually and engages youth from the of ages 6 to 17 with financial or cultural barriers. Furthermore, these individuals are provided with the opportunity to learn how to skate and play hockey with the help of CPS officers and ‘Hockey Calgary’ volunteers. Anywhere from 70-100 youth are included in the weekly activities during October to March. Programs such as these provide a safe and comfortable environment for the participants and their parents. This opportunity is a constructive and prosocial exercise, which includes constructive interactions with law enforcement (para.1).

Maybe the most influential and well-known model of sports-based crime prevention was developed and implemented in the late 1980's by G. Van Standifer (Hartmann & Depro, 2006, p.182). Standifer, a former town manager in Maryland, became convinced that one of the central problems for poor adolescent males living in the inner cities was that they lacked safety and an absence of prosocial activities. Standifer's solution to this predicament was to organize a community basketball league for three months of summer during the high crime hours of 10:00pm to 2:00am.

In order to ensure the program would run smoothly, Standifer incorporated three simple components into his model. Firstly, the target group must be between the ages of 17 to 21; next, the games will not start anytime prior to 10:00pm; lastly, two uniformed officers must be present and visible during each game (Hartmann & Depro, 2006, p.182). Although Standifer initially started this program in Washington D.C, many cities begun developing copycat programs because of the overwhelming promise shown. Furthermore, Hartmann &

Depro (2006) suggest that after preliminary findings, midnight basketball programs were associated with some significance towards crime prevention (p.182). However, there is much more information to gather and research to be done when examining the extent of this program's effectiveness.

One of the key reasons for the uprise in popularity for using sports-intervention programs are the economic benefits. According to Hartmann & Depro (2006), these programs are relatively inexpensive and are easy to implement (p.181). In an era of decreased public funding towards outreach and intervention programs, sport-based intervention programs have become a cost-effective intervention strategy for targeting at risk youth, while providing increase social bond opportunities. These programs also have the benefit of attracting sponsorships from sports organizations, athletes, non-profit groups, and other businesses as the appeal for sports is wide-spread — especially when dealing with at-risk youth.

Another important element that has led to the increase of sports-based intervention programs is the wide-spread belief that they are inherently positive for the development of prosocial character-building in youth. Countless professional athletes have attributed their success from having sports as an activity that kept them off the streets and away from delinquent activities. Many scholars and policy makers believe sports-programs provide the development of important prosocial features, such as proper socialization, growth of prosocial relationships, learning from role-model like individuals, and providing opportunities for youth to advance in their respective sport.

### **II-3) A Comprehensive View into Sports**

This chapter will begin by analyzing several key dynamics into sports beginning with the influence of the sports environment. Next, the examination between the variation of sports will be discussed, concluded by jock status and unstructured socializing.

#### *II-3-a) Influence of the Sports Environment*

Athletes spend many hours dedicated to training and competing. During the time in their respective sport, the environment, among other factors, can influence individual behaviour during participation and outside of the sports context. These environments contribute to athletes's behaviours in life, especially during adolescence. Aside from peer groups, who may very well be apart of the sports environment, coaches and other sport agents have a strong influence on athlete's attitudes during the crucial development period of adolescence. Needless to say, establishing a safe and positive sports environment is important for developing pro-social behaviour in adolescents. This sub-section will go through the different elements that contribute to the ideal sports environment.

A study by Rutten & Colleagues (2008), found that various elements of a sports environment can influence the attitudes of adolescents regarding prosocial or antisocial behaviours, both during and away from their playing domain (as cited in Spruit, van der Put, van Vogt & Stams, 2018, p.1537). Coaches, coach-player relationships, player-player relationships and the level of positiveness of the team atmosphere were all identified as important elements in establishing a prosocial sports environment.

According to (Spruit et al., 2018), the team culture within adolescent sports teams can have a strong influence on an athlete's pro-social and antisocial behaviours. The desirable sports environment is considered a 'pedagogical' sports climate. The pedagogical sports

climate is characterized by a “fair play” mentality. Within this model the social and personal development and growth of the athlete as a person is valued far more than the results of winning or losing. The foundational components of a pedagogical environment are: positive relationships between the athletes and with their coaches, mutual trust and respect between all the sports agents within the sports environment, collective established norms and acceptable behaviours within the sports context (p.1537).

Coaches are the key pioneers in establishing the pedagogical sports culture within a team. They essentially control whether a pedagogical environment can be created or not. Coaches set the standards for a team's code of ethics, acceptable norms and behaviour, code of conduct, practice habits, etc. A team's coach directly impacts the team atmosphere by the example they demonstrate. Whether it's indirectly or directly, their actions and words heavily influence the “locker-room” climate. A coach who possesses strong education skills and is able to be responsive, while being sensitive to their player's needs are important characteristics, especially when dealing with socially vulnerable adolescents (p.1537).

Coaches are able to influence a team's social climate in significant ways. Examples of ways coaches can influence a team poorly includes, but is not limited to; communicating negative themes and language, allowing their players to behave disrespectfully towards opponents, teammates, fans and other personnel, displaying of aggressive tendencies, dismissing towards their own players, and hypocritical towards rules that they have established for the team. A coach can influence the team environment positively by; having strong athlete-coach relationships, demonstrating support for their players, displaying positive behaviour, and ensuring cohesive dynamics between all the actors within the sports environment, first by establishing cohesion between coaching staff.



Finally, scholars have suggested that player to player relationships have a significant influence on an adolescent's behaviour. In many ways, sports participation is thought to serve as a buffer for adolescents from the influence of delinquent peers. By engaging in activities where there are prosocial messages and expectations to comply with similarly framed values — adolescents will learn to develop prosocial behaviours because they, along with their peers, must adhere to the standards set for them which in turn should develop positive ways of behaving (Taylor et al., 2016, p.319).

Although scholars have suggested that prosocial behaviours and values can be developed through sports-participation, the opposite has also been found to be true. Jacob & Lefgren (2003) indicate that sport participation and intervention programs have the potential to unintentionally increase juvenile behaviours by concentrating on adolescents who share delinquent traits (as cited in Hartmann & Depro, 2006, p.181-182). Resultantly, this environment can facilitate the reinforcement of antisocial behaviours and deviant-peer subculture. Further research suggests evidence that deviant adolescents tend to gravitate towards other deviant adolescents — becoming a larger peer group.

Paetsch & Bertrand (1997) used a Calgary-based adolescent sample to determine whether delinquent peers can influence their peers to engage in delinquent activities. They found there was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables of peers and delinquency. Despite these findings, they also determined as much as delinquent peers can influence an individual's behaviour, the opposite is also true. Paetsch & Bertrand found that when individuals engage in activities with antisocial peers, they reported no levels of delinquent behaviour, just as much as the individuals who reported a moderate/ high level of delinquency. These findings suggest association with antisocial peers is not the sole reason

for influencing delinquent behaviour and requires further research into other attributing factors (p.31).

### *II-3-b) Variations by Sports*

According to Segrave et al., (1985), male and female athletes who participated in major sports were more involved with delinquent and anti-social behaviour than athletes who were involved with minor sports. Major sports were classified as baseball, basketball, ice-hockey, and football for males. Whereas, soccer, softball, and volleyball were classified as the major sports for women. All other sports were classified as minor (p.282)

Furthermore, Segrave et al., (1982) conducted their own study in Metropolitan Montreal — looking at delinquency rates among adolescent hockey players and non-athletes. The sample included 170 total students in high-school. 124 of those students were involved in hockey at various levels ranging from a competitive local midget league, to a team in a highly competitive provincial league. The other 46 students were non-athletes. The data used for this study was comprised of results from self-report questionnaires. The questionnaires obtained information regarding several socio-psychological variables, such as delinquent associates, attachment to school, subterranean and conventional value orientations, perceptions of limited opportunities and delinquent behaviours (p.284).

Results from this study revealed a strong correlation between the following variables to higher delinquency: delinquent, associates, attachment to school, and perceptions of limited opportunities. These three socio-psychological variables were associated with delinquent factors for the hockey players of all levels, plus the non-athlete group. In general, it was determined that the higher level of play the ice hockey players participated in, the lower the involvement in delinquency. However, one exception to this was that violence was

prevalent at all levels of ice-hockey (p.294). Furthermore, hockey players reported significantly higher levels of violent behaviour than non-athletes. One explanation for this may be that ice-hockey players learn to exhibit this behaviour through their hockey playing experiences. Therefore, these players are predisposed to violent tendencies, especially as they can be rewarded for this behaviour. In essence — hockey, like other contact sports, such as football and rugby, actually institutionalize aggressive behaviour. The normalization of physical aggression in hockey from body-checking to fighting is normalized throughout different adolescent levels all the way to the professional level.

A more recent (2005) longitudinal study was conducted in Norway looking at behavioural patterns of Norwegian boys aged 11 to 13 that participated in power sports. Power sports were classified as boxing, weightlifting, wrestling and martial arts. This study's results found that participation in these power sports led to an increase in antisocial behaviours, specifically an increase of violent and non-violent behaviours outside of the sports setting (Faulkner et al., 2007, p.155). Contrastingly, Davis & Menard (2013) found that adolescents who participated in non-contact sports had a higher likelihood of becoming involved in illegal behaviours — whereas athletes involved in contact-sports were found to have a lesser likelihood of becoming involved in the same illegal behaviours (p.43).

Kelley & Katz (2011) state that it is possible when comparing contact to non-contact sports for the behaviours to be too obscure to measure (p.95). Within some sports, certain antisocial behaviours are embraced, let alone tolerated. Resultantly, distinguishing between delinquency and participation is difficult, especially in sports such as ice-hockey or martial arts. This was evident when in 1991, Jules Jobidon was charged for manslaughter through the offence of assault for the unlawful killing of Rodney Haggart. Jobidon and Haggart engaged in mutual fisticuff outside the parking lot of a bar. Jobidon struck Haggart with a punch that

knocked him unconscious, and Jobidon continued to strike Haggart with a flurry of punches before he hit the ground. Haggart resultantly died from the impact he suffered, leading to Jobidon appealing his charge of manslaughter. Jobidon used consent as his defence, stating the fight was consensual as both parties were aware of the potential consequences. The appeal was ultimately denied because outside of organized sports such as ice-hockey, boxing and martial arts, consent could not be applied to public altercations. As long as the physical aggression is within the context of the rules of the sport, the aggression is permitted as seen in hockey with fighting. Otherwise, in a setting such as a bar fight, applied-consent is an invalid defense (*R.v Jobidon* (1991), SCR 714 (2nd), 714 (Ontario, C.A)).

Scholars have found research supporting claims of sports-participation facilitating delinquency. However, evidence also suggests that sports-participation deters delinquency through the programming and development of prosocial behaviour and values. Though most of this research has only looked at team sports. Taylor et al (2016) found that individually-played sports still adhere to team-sport ideas and beliefs. For example, within individual sport contexts such as tennis or track, individuals are still likely to be part of a group or team setting. Within this environment there's a still a sense of accountability and moral development, though there's more onus on the individual to achieve this by themselves rather than a team facilitating the standards that must be met. (p.319).

There's been a scarcity of research conducted regarding delinquency rates comparing team-sports versus individually-played sports. However, from the data that has been collected, the findings suggest individuals who participate in team sports tend to demonstrate more antisocial behaviour than those involved in individual based sports. This finding was further illustrated when Priest et al., (1999) found that intercollegiate and-team sport athletes scored lower on an ethical value test, than intramural and individual based sports from the

U.S military academy (as cited in Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Sabo, & Farrell, 2007, p. 713).

Taylor et al., (2006) suggests part of the reason for these variations in results includes the sports environment actually facilitates delinquency, especially with adolescents at risk. When surrounding antisocial individuals together, regardless of the intention of the sport, these teams can be potentially viewed as prosocial gangs. (p.333).

#### **II-4) Jock Status & Socialization of Sports**

This section will explore the influence that “jock identity” or “jock status” and unstructured socialization has on delinquency and sports.

##### *II-4-a) Jock Status*

A variety of factors have been discussed as possible explanations for why individuals that participate in sports become involved in delinquency. One explanation that garners little attention is the concept of athletes pertaining to a “jock status.” The term jock combines the elements of: hegemonic masculinity, increased levels of risk-taking, and exemption from ordinary rules. Miller et al (2007) linked problem drinking, peer violence and sexual risk-taking as characteristics of jock identity.

Consistent with this perspective, Burton & Marshall (2005) determined similar findings in a relatively small sample in Scotland (as cited in Miler et al., 2007, p.342). Results found that participation in sports were positively associated with rule breaking, though not with aggressive behaviour. With a heightened status such as a jock, it's evident that this can lead to behaviour where the athlete believes they're “above the law.” Miller et al (2007) found that individuals who identified as jock status were associated with the higher levels of major and minor delinquency compared to non-jocks. Major delinquency included acts such as: drug use, vandalizing, theft, break-ins and physical violence (p.720). Minor

delinquency acts included: cheating, cursing, fighting with parents, binge drinking, curfew violations and sexual promiscuity (p.719).

#### *II-4-b) Unstructured Socializing*

It's no coincidence that juvenile crime peaks during the hours of 3pm to 6pm — the hours between the end of an adolescents school day to when parent's typically return home from work (Gardner, Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2009, p.341). That's why most school sports and extra-curricular programs are set for these times. Similarly, many non-school programs and sport organizations will try to schedule their activities during this gap in time — effectively addressing a lack of supervision by working-parents, replaced by coaches or program leaders.

In order to address the juvenile crime peak, parents and guardians tend to promote extracurricular activities and sports to their kids with the expectation that their kids are part of a structured and supervised environment. Where the problems arise, however, are when adolescents engage in 'unstructured socializing'. The time spent socializing in an unstructured environment is usually during the time before and after practices, games and other events (Gardner et al., 2009, p.343). Gardner et al., argues there's evidence to suggest that during the times of unstructured socializing, this type of interaction with other peers leads to more problem behaviour and delinquency. Brown & Lohr (1987) suggest that similar to jock identity, athletes may find their social status rising as a result of their athlete identity, resulting in more opportunities to participate in unstructured activities such as invitations to hang out with their peers and attend parties (as cited in Gardner et al., 2009, p.351).

Although evidence suggests unstructured socializing periods can result in more problem behaviour and delinquency, Gardner et al., (2009) did not find significant associations between sports participation and violent delinquency — regardless of the

comparison group for boys (p.350). However, it was found for nonviolent delinquency, that boys who participated in sports and those who didn't associate with any organized activity engaged in more delinquency than those who participated in non-athletic activities. This suggests that structured socializing is important as seen by those who did not associate with anything and the opportunities during a sports context. Moreover, the influence of a coach, supervisor, or leader may become even more important for setting boundaries and demonstrating prosocial behaviours in an effort to decrease the effects of unstructured socializing.

## **II-5) Chapter Summary**

The literature review is a critical section for examining consistent themes amongst current literature, plus identifying current gaps in knowledge. Through the use of social bond theory, the four elements associated with this theory were used in an attempt to explain possible explanations for adolescents who participate in sports becoming more or less susceptible to delinquency. Key themes such as: the history of sports participation, a comprehensive view into sports, and jock status ultimately provide context into the dynamics that influence delinquency from a sports perspective. Jock status and unstructured socializing require further research in future studies as a potentially important factor s when attempting to explain delinquency among athletes. The following section will discuss the methodology, research design and data analysis for this thesis.

## CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN & DATA ANALYSIS

### IV-1) Chapter Overview

This chapter examine the methodology, research design and data analysis techniques used for the construction of this thesis. Through qualitative methods and a meta-analysis research design, the answer to whether sports-based activities deter delinquency and serve as an effective intervention strategy for adolescents became more transparent. This chapter begins with an overview of the methodological approach, then transitions into more information regarding the research design. The collection and analysis of the data is then explored, ending with a complete chapter summary which also discusses limitations associated with the different factions of this chapter.

#### *IV-1-a) Overview of Methodological Approach*

The approach to this study was a qualitative method, using a meta-analysis design. Although an abundance of information was collected and analyzed for this study there is more work to be done in the future to ensure more conclusive results. The *research question* was answered. However, the accuracy of the results are unreliable because of the need for future research on the topic. The meta-analysis research design allowed for an abundance of secondary data to be analyzed. These studies included ideas and results that were conflicting and similar to allow for perspective on the topic of sports-participation and delinquency.

#### *IV-1-b) Research Design*

As previously mentioned in the *rationale* section, the research design selected for this thesis was a meta-analysis. By using a meta-analysis, this thesis was able to systematically evaluate and summarize findings from several studies by looking at key concepts related to



the research question. Some of the key themes researched were; delinquency, sports, adolescents, school, peers, and social bond among others. The main objective of the meta-analysis was to analyze differences and similarities from results found in previous studies. Fortunately, many of these studies were relatively homogenous in nature. However, there was limited consistency with the results as some found similar findings, while others differed.

Majority of the content in the literature review section consisted of mixed-method and meta-analysis research designs. The researchers who used mixed-method as their research design were able to develop their own sample and compile their own results, while also drawing information from secondary data. They were also able to use both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. In the future, a longitudinal or mixed method research design would be the most ideal model for more extensive research into the topic of sports-participation and delinquency.

#### *IV-1-c) Collection and Analysis of Data and Information*

The majority of data collection for this thesis was archival research. Resultantly, this information was primarily collected through using various search engines. Several of the search engines used for the collection of data included: 'ProQuest research library,' EBSCOhost, Springerlink, Sage journals, and CRKN Elsevier ScienceDirect. Furthermore, legal websites such as 'SCC by Lexum' and CanLii provided the thesis with a legal database when using the R.v Jobidon case. Statistics Canada was another website helpful for determining the necessary statistics needed to complete the rationale and significance sections of this thesis. There were a handful of textbooks used, particularly for content regarding social bond theory and the theoretical analysis section in general. Lastly, google and google scholar were utilized.

The information selected from peer-reviewed and scholarly articles had to be relevant to sports participation, delinquency, and social-bond theory. Through the use of Travis Hirschi's theory and the four key elements associated with the theory (attachment, involvement, commitment, beliefs), this thesis was able to properly analyze the literature. Other theoretical approaches have merit when considering deviance and sports, but for the purpose of this thesis, it was limited to social-bond theory.

The process began with reading a few dozen research articles and organizing the findings by categories. For example, the separation of information ranged from theoretical elements of social bond theory to the history of sports participation as a form of crime prevention. Throughout this process, common findings, contradictions in literature and possible relationships between delinquency and sports participation were assessed. The most important part of assessing the data was to make sure it was properly organized and were relevant to this thesis's research question.

#### **IV-2) Chapter Summary**

The purpose of the methodology chapter was to explain the rationale for the methodological approach, the research design, and how data was analyzed for this thesis. By utilizing a meta-analysis methodological approach, a surplus of secondary research was examined and subsequently used for the information presented in the literature review section. A variety of search engines — particularly 'ProQuest research library' provided efficient and helpful results in relation to delinquency and sports participation. The lack of contrast and diversity of the studies posed as a challenge. Resultantly, future research regarding sports participation and delinquency should narrow in on specific themes within the sports context such: as team sports versus individual sports, the influences of sports

agents, and other topics other than sports through a sociological or criminological lens.

Following this chapter will be the discussion section. The discussion will connect all of the key themes and topics between the literature while also focusing on suggested future research.

## CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

### VI-1) Chapter Overview

The discussion chapter will summarize and connect the findings previously outlined in the literature review. This section will recap the key themes found from utilizing a meta-analysis approach to examine the studies analyzed — linking the main concepts of delinquency and sports participation to social bond-theory. This chapter will begin by addressing the research question, then addressing the findings. Implications and contradictions will be discussed after, followed by suggested further research and concluding with a chapter summary.

### VI-2) Addressing the Research Question

In addressing the research question: *'Do sports-based activities deter delinquency and serve as an effective intervention strategy for adolescents through the lens of social-bond theory,'* the evidence found suggested that sports participation can actually have an inverse effect and may increase juvenile behaviour in adolescents. Despite this, programs using sports as an intervention strategy tended to yield positive results when the program was structured and provided prosocial circumstances for adolescents. Though social-bond serves as an effective theory to explain why sports would serve as an ideal activity to deter delinquency, there were multiple factors that arose which social-bond theory could not address such as: unstructured socializing and jock identity. Ultimately, there is a lack of research on the topic, and requires further examination into the topic.

### **VI-3) Findings**

The relationship between sports-participation and delinquency is complex and requires further research. There is evidence that elements of sports and athletic activities can contribute to prosocial values that in-turn influence an adolescent's personal development — as evidenced by the 'pedagogical' sports climate (Spruit et al., 2018, p.1537). However, there's also evidence that suggests sports, particularly aggressive sports, indirectly influence antisocial behaviours within youth. This suggests there are more unexplored variables that affect delinquent behaviour beyond the sole influence of participating in sports. Finally, after looking at sport participation and delinquency through the theoretical lens of social-bond, the two elements that had the most influence were attachment and commitment.

Beginning with social bond theory — attachment, particularly to school, was a salient variable in the causation of delinquency among both athletes and non-athletes (Segrave et al., 1985, p.283). The strength of the bond between school and the individual has been found among various studies to be an important factor when assessing the causes of delinquency. Individuals who stated they had more prosocial experiences during school, and maintained higher grades, tended to engage in less antisocial behaviour than those who shared a weaker bond to school. Though, it's been noted that athletes are likely to perceive school as more positive than non-athletes. Athletes tend to receive special assistance from teachers and coaches, resulting in school becoming more appealing because of these kinds of pro-educational influences.

Another important attachment existing between delinquency and sports participation is the bond between an individual to their peers. According to Rehberg & Schafer (1968), athletes were reported as having close friends who possessed more prosocial behaviours, stronger educational attitudes and aspirations than those of non-athletes (as cited in Segrave

et al., 1985, p.283). This point was argued by numerous scholars, suggesting sports can facilitate delinquency — especially when in the presence of antisocial peers. For example, Loeber, Farrington, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Van Kammen (1998) reported that a study found seventh graders who reported having relationships with delinquent peers were 3.8 times more likely to become delinquent than those who did not affiliate with antisocial friends (as cited in Gardner et al., 2009, p.342).

The bonds between individuals to school and their peers were found to be influenced heavily by the presence of a pedagogical sports climate. This model of a sports environment acknowledges the notion that through sports participation, adolescents are learning key values and behaviours from numerous sports agents, such as their teammates, coaches, parents etc. Beyond winning, the importance of mutual respect, character development and establishing prosocial norms are what drives the pedagogical perspective (Gano-Overway et al., 2009; Guivernau & Duda, 2002; Rutten et al., 2007, as cited in Spruit et al., 2018, p. 1537).

The pedagogical perspective suggests a sports coach is the central figure in providing the necessary components to make the environment effective. As adolescents spend an abundance of time with their respective sports coaches and other mentor figures, the organizations hiring individuals to be coaches must do their due diligence and ensure they are choosing people who are responsive to the developmental needs of youth, before the focus on the actual sports enhancing itself. The ability to be responsive to an adolescent's needs, educational and communicational skills are important characteristics coaches should possess — particularly when dealing with at-risk youth (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011; Morgan & Bush, 2016; Riley, Anderson-Butcher, Logan, Newman, & Davis, 2016, as cited in Spruit et al., 2018, p.1537).

Although the pedagogical model is suggested to be the ideal model for deterring antisocial behaviours in a sports-climate, it's unrealistic to expect coaches and other sports agents to be able to supervise their athletes all the time — hence the concept of 'unstructured socializing'. Coaches can demonstrate positive behaviour and instil character-building expectations for their athletes. However, eventually the onus comes onto these athletes to abide by these same values established for them.

Recent years in Canada have seen several troubling cases of delinquency among adolescents. These events involved student-athletes and included relatively severe disciplinary measures, one of the cases even resulting in criminal charges. The most recent case occurred in February of 2019, involving members of the North Shore Winter Club (NSWC). The NSWC is a private-members only organization in North Vancouver that has produced several National Hockey League (NHL) players. After a significant locker-room hazing incident occurred between 2 perpetrating players and one victim, the coaching staff of the team and several parents wanted the alleged perpetrators kicked off the team. When the punishment for the perpetrating players was reduced to a short suspension, the head coach subsequently left the team and several parents cancelled their memberships with the club. Brad Rihela, the former head coach, justified his decision to leave by stating "the coach's job is to create a culture, and the way this was handled didn't fall in line with my beliefs and values" (Humphreys & Quan, 2019, para.5).

The consequence of this event for the NWSC will be that the club has forfeited an ethical, qualified coach at the expense of maintaining two of their paying-members. This scenario highlights one of the primary obstacles in attempting to create a pedagogical sports environment — the need for all sports agents to share similar values and abide by them when a pressing issue arises. It's vital that when issues emerge which violate a club's code of

conduct, the club must realize their subsequent disciplinary measure will set the precedent for future occurrences.

Almost four months prior to the NWSC hazing case, Toronto police charged six students from St. Michaels College School with sexual assault. The students were charged with three different offences, including assault, gang sexual assault and assault with a weapon. The incident occurred when a group of students who were part of the school's football team pinned down another student and sexually assaulted him with a broom handle. (CBC News, 2018, para. 13). Eight students were resultantly expelled in connection to the incident. A video of the event surfaced and was transferred over different forms of social media. The Toronto police then warned if anyone was in possession of the video, they would be charged with child pornography to deter any further distribution of the content.

This case illustrates the importance of abiding by a code of conduct and disciplining any violations of said code. Furthermore, the problem arises again of unstructured socializing. Students and athletes must be aware of the consequences for certain behaviours, as that is the coach's job of creating a prosocial environment with ethical values. However, it is the organizations, schools, or club's responsibility to adhere to these expectations and discipline their athletes accordingly when there's a violation — as seen by the St. Michael's College case.

Jock identity is a relatively under-researched explanation for what occurred during the St. Michael's College incident. As evidenced by this event, these football players felt they did not have to conform to school, let alone legal rules when they sexually assaulted their classmate. To reiterate, Miller et al., (2007) explained jock identity as being linked to sexual risk taking, peer violence and problem drinking (p.722). Two of these characteristics of Miller's definition are present in the St Michael's College case. As for problem drinking, other studies



have found a link between increased sports participation and alcohol use. Mays, DePadilla, Thompson, Kushner & Windle (2010) found evidence that adolescents who participate in sports alone have accelerated rates of problem alcohol use (as cited in Taylor et al., 2016, p. 320-321).

Social bond theory's commitment element suggests that those who are more committed to their respective sport, school or activity will be less likely to risk their spot on the team by engaging in delinquency. From the previous two examples of NWSC and St. Michael's College, commitment seems to fail as an unconscious deterrent. Most academies such as the two aforementioned programs screen their potential suitors extensively. Therefore, the clubs do their best to ensure their programs are bringing in character kids and represent the clubs accordingly. This then begs various questions; do some athletes abuse jock identity once elevated into a higher status as a result of sports? Why can some athletes restrain from delinquent behaviours and others cannot?

Fortunately, there are findings that have found commitment as having a positive effect on higher level athletes. As reported in Segrave et al's., (1985) study, provincial level hockey players demonstrated less delinquent behaviour than individuals playing in lower tiered levels of ice-hockey (p.295). The findings suggest provincial hockey players — who are screened previous to the evaluation period had more to lose, more to gain through prosocial behaviours, less time to engage in delinquency, and a higher attachment to school than those involved in lower levels of ice-hockey. Otherwise, the only common variable between the two group was that when engaging in delinquent behaviour, hockey players demonstrated more violent behaviour than non-athletes. (p.289).

As evidenced by these findings, attachment is the most important variable in a sports context when attempting to reduce delinquency — particularly the attachment to school.

Commitment can have a positive effect for higher level athletes, however lacks positive results for athletes in general for deterring delinquency. Involvement and belief were not included as relevant within a sports context because there was no conclusive evidence that either element had much of an effect. Involvement, however, could specifically have unintended consequences of athletes becoming more involved in unstructured socializing. As sports participation and sports intervention programs are intended to increase prosocial behaviours, more involvement in unstructured socializing may cause the opposite effect and influence jock status behaviour. Finally, there were no notable studies that suggested belief has an overwhelming effect on athletes. Sports did not necessarily influence an athlete's beliefs. However, with the establishment of a pedagogical sports climate and presence of positive sports coaches or mentors, there is optimism that these factors can influence prosocial behaviours and further ethical values among athletes.

#### **VI-4) Implications & Contradictions**

The findings from this thesis would benefit any program, organization or intervention agency that works with adolescents — particularly ones that deal with at-risk youth. Policy makers should consider some of the different variables that affect and influence delinquency within a sports context and try to address them. A variety of options exist to improve the technical applications of sports such; as ethics, communication and other prosocial training for coaches, mentors and other sports agents. The benefits of this training should reduce antisocial behaviours among adolescent athletes and allow for the creation of pedagogical environments among sports teams and agencies.

Programs such as CPS's 'power-play program,' mid-night basketball and other sports intervention strategies have been innovative and effective in reducing delinquency. Some of

the other benefits have been at-risk youth forming attachments to model-figures in society and learning prosocial behaviour. By reducing factors such as unstructured socializing and jock identity, there sports programs and intervention strategies can operate as effectively as possible when attempting to limit antisocial behaviours.

Various theories have been used as frameworks for why adolescents engage in delinquency, however, none of them sufficiently explained the causes, nor found effective strategies to combat delinquency within a sports context. This thesis has identified several issues within a sports environment that if reduced, can have a significant impact on limiting youth delinquency plus positively influencing prosocial behaviours. Future research on unstructured socializing and jock status — specifically the reduction of jock status would pay dividends for coaches, let alone policy makers and governments who operationalize sports prevention programs.

#### **VI-5) Suggested Future Research**

The findings from this thesis suggest there are more factors that influence delinquency from a sports context. These findings lack a theory that can adequately explain the phenomenon and requires a further extensive examination. Firstly, rather than using criminological theories in the future to explain delinquency and sports, the focus rather should be on what produces prosocial behaviours. The first suggestion is to use an experimental design to test whether a pedagogical sports climate can reduce delinquent behaviour. By using a control group and experimental group, a researcher can measure the rates of success between a non-pedagogical environment and a pro-pedagogical one. Rate of success could be measured by the rate of delinquent behaviour. However, we can also measure this by observing the win-loss results, questionnaires determining satisfaction with

the athlete's participation on the team, and difference in hazing or any notable antisocial incidents.

Another suggested future research consists of measuring the difference in delinquency rates between contact sports versus non-contact sports — in addition to the differences between team sports versus individual sports. This will assist in determining whether contact sports actually facilitate aggressive behaviour within athletes. Furthermore, examining team sports versus individual sports may shed light as to whether teams act more as prosocial gangs, or if they can be influential in increasing positive behaviours.

Lastly, and most importantly, further studies should research the effects of unstructured socializing and jock status among adolescent athletes. A study assessing whether the pedagogical sports environment can override these two influences is vital towards addressing youth delinquency. There are no theories that sufficiently explain why unstructured socializing can lead to an increase in the prevalence of delinquency and why jock identity influences antisocial behaviours for athletes. These two topics require further extensive research and appear to be extremely important issues to address in regards to reducing youth crime and delinquency.

## **VI-6) Chapter Summary**

Through the use of social bond theory, the relationship between delinquency and sports-participation was able to be thoroughly analyzed in this section. Although sports-participation can offer various prosocial benefits, there is extensive research that supports the notion that unintended antisocial behaviours are developed through sports activities as well. Furthermore, important revelations into future research regarding this topic should investigate the influences of jock status and unstructured socializing. The pedagogical effect is also

important for establishing a prosocial sports environment, however it's yet to be seen or researched whether this sports climate can deter delinquent behaviour. The next and final chapter of this thesis will be the conclusion.

## CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

### VII-1) Chapter Overview

This thesis examines the relationship between sports participation and delinquency. Through the use of a meta-analysis methodological approach, the following research question was explored; *Do sports-based activities deter delinquency and serve as an effective intervention strategy for adolescents through the lens of social-bond theory?* The purpose of using social bond theory was to discover whether the relationship between sports participation and delinquency could be examined through this theoretical lens. The findings from this thesis will be beneficial for future research regarding this topic. Furthermore, policy makers, government agencies, crime prevention strategists targeting at risk-youth and coaches dealing with adolescents will benefit from research regarding sports participation and youth. Although the elements of social bond and factors such as the pedagogical model were the initial focus, the eventual focus shifted to new important revelations such as the impact unstructured socializing and jock status has on delinquency within a sports context.

### VII-2) Summary of Key Research Findings and Implications

Two new concepts within a sports context called unstructured socializing and jock identity are two relatively unexplored, and potentially important findings for future research. Beyond the sports context itself, these findings can be influential in addressing youth crime in general. Jock status coincides with power dynamics, which extends beyond athletes. Furthermore, the findings in this thesis, as well as the potential of future findings, suggest a new theoretical approach to youth and crime may be necessary as the concepts of

unstructured socializing and jock status are not considered enough with some of the more traditional criminological theories.

### **VII-3) Limitations and Other Considerations**

When considering which methodological approach was appropriate for this thesis, one limitation that had to be considered was the time constraints for the completion of a finished product. This time constraint limited the extent of experimental research and primary data that could be collected throughout the process. Thereby using a meta-analysis approach allowed for the opportunity to access a surplus of secondary data.

The literature itself included various limitations too. For example, some of the studies were as outdated as 1985, and had a wide gap between the most recent study of 2018. Furthermore, many of the studies were broad and varied differently from other studies by their definitions of delinquency. Similarly, physical activity ranged as minimal as individual exercise or weight lifting to competitive team sports. The lack of consistency regarding how physical activity was defined was a common limitation among studies.

Another limitation regarding the literature was certain variables, such as family situation, economic status, potential mental deficits, or other neurophysiological deficiencies not being accounted for as potential influences among adolescents behaviours pertaining to delinquency or lack of. This stems from a lack of extensive research into the topic, and the absence of a theoretical approach that properly encapsulates the relationship between sports and delinquency.

Lastly, within the sports context there are a variety of topics that have yet to be thoroughly examined. Factors influencing delinquency rates among individual sports versus

team sports is one topic that lacks data. Furthermore, differences between contact sports and non-contact sports yield relatively inconsistent results and lack the data to support either side.

### **VII-6) Chapter Summary**

Through the use of a pedagogical or similar model, sports participation develops and install prosocial attitudes into youth — deterring antisocial behaviours. However, without addressing various barriers in attempting to achieve the pedagogical sports climate, factors such as unstructured socializing and jock identity can contribute to higher rates of delinquency. By using a meta-analysis, the research highlighted concluded that there's overwhelming evidence that sports participation is linked to delinquency — specifically when individuals have greater attachments to delinquent peers and a lack of bond to school. This topic can be ground-breaking with regards to addressing youth-crime and developing a model that can more effectively address youth-crime. All youth deserve the opportunity to participate in sports and other prosocial activities. The hope is that through further research, antisocial factors will be combatted allowing for adolescents to properly experience the sensation of playing sports.



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