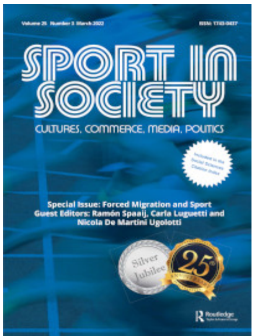

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Leaders building relationships with young refugees during a sport project

Froukje Smits[a] and Annelies Knoppers[b]

[a]Institute Social Work, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Utrecht, The Netherlands; [b]School of Governance, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is to examine how social work students (SWs) attempted to enact social work principles to engage in relationship building with young refugees during a Sport for Development project. The project, 'U on Board' was built on the assumption that pleasure and enjoyment in physical activity could contribute to the wellbeing of participants. The project took place at a refugee centre in a Dutch midsized city. We drew on Foucauldian notions of pastoral power and dressage to analyze how SWs applied social work principles to engage in relationship building with participating refugees. The Foucauldian based analysis revealed the SWs built positive relationships with the refugees by applying principles they had learned in their social work education through the disciplining power of dressage and of pastoral power.

KEYWORDS

Leadership skills; relationship building; refugees; action sport; social work

Recent reviews of Sport for Development (SfD) research and sport and forced migration studies found that most of the scholarly attention has focused on the objectives and content of such programs with few if any, focusing specifically on the congruency between the objectives of the program and the skill set of those who offer or lead the sport activities[1] (Schulenkorf, Sherry, and Rowe 2016; Spaaij et al. 2019). Based on their review and critique of core pedagogical strategies used in SfD initiatives, Spaaij and Jeanes (2013) suggested that establishing and maintaining positive relationships between those offering a project (leaders) and those young people for whom the project is earmarked should be a primary goal of such programs. Scholarly explorations of skills that may enable leaders/workers to engage in relationship building in SfD projects have however, received relatively little scholarly attention. [End note: In this paper, we refer to those working with participants in these programs as leaders.]

Although those who work in SfD projects may possess the physical expertise to transmit sport skills to participants, leaders may overlook the needs of participants in SfD projects or focus on objectives such as working towards sport club membership and developing competitive sport skills (e.g. Waardenburg et al. 2019). Sport professionals are educated to teach sport skills but may not have the necessary expertise in working with youth such as young refugees. In contrast, relationship building is a core objective of social work and its

CONTACT Froukje Smits Froukje.smits@hu.nl

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use is assumed to contribute to the wellbeing and safeguarding of youth positioned as precarious (Newbigging and Thomas 2011; Tudor 2020). Similar to arguments made by Welty Peachey and Burton (2017), Newbigging and Thomas (2011) argue that a primary component of relationship building in social work is a clear commitment to a focus on practices that contribute to the wellbeing of children and young people rather than the demands of organizations such as those that organize immigration and sport activities. Similarly, Carroll and Minkler (2000), who discussed the link between such objectives and social work, have suggested that social workers are ideally positioned to enact an approach of care in their work because social work relies on relationship building to enable individual and collective social change. Therefore, in contrast to sport professionals who may often be involved as leaders in SfD projects (e.g. Soares Moura 2020; Thorpe and Chawansky 2016; Zipp, Smith, and Darnell 2019), social workers may be well suited as professionals who work with young refugees in sport and physical activities during an SfD project. The curriculum of the social work program from which students were drawn to be leaders for this project is built in part on learning and developing skills in relationship building. Consequently, social work students (SWs) were invited to participate in an SfD project for refugees that we describe below.

Scholarship focusing on SfD projects, including those for refugees, reveals that the focus of many such projects has often been on the learning of sport skills, on using sport to develop life skills, on empowerment, on guiding youth towards sport club membership, on enhancing the integration of refugees into the country where the refugees hope to live/settle and on contributing to the wellbeing of participants (Kaya et al. 2021; Kidd 2011; Schulenkorf, Sherry, and Rowe 2016; Spaaij and Jeanes 2013; Spaaij et al. 2019; Válková 2021; Welty Peachey and Burton 2017; Welty Peachey, Schulenkorf, and Hill 2020; Zipp, Smith, and Darnell 2019). Kaya et al. (2021) found however, that immigrant and young refugees did not have long term goals for participation in such projects but participated in sport because they viewed it as a fun activity that gave them an opportunity to interact with others in an enjoyable way. SfD programs targeting refugees may often have the same goals as cited above, but also may have been created to offer a respite from boredom, to foster a sense of belonging and to contribute to social inclusion and to wellbeing (Doidge, Keech, and Sandri 2020; Kaya et al. 2021; Michelini 2021; Olliff 2008; Stone 2018; Wells and Welty Peachey 2016).

Spaaij et al. (2019) have argued that the emotional aspects of sport participation are a key area requiring more research in SfD and forced migration studies. Jetzke and Mutz (2020) found that noncompetitive forms of physical activity that evoked fun and enjoyment did more for individual wellbeing than competitive sport participation. Similarly, Andrews, Chen, and Myers (2014) have argued that experiences of pleasure, fun, and enjoyment in physical activity act as nutrients, contribute to the wellbeing of participants. The results of an urban SfD program targeting disadvantaged girls revealed how a longboarding project evoked fun and enjoyment in physical activity that was assumed to inform the wellbeing of participants (Smits and Knoppers 2020). Ley and Barrio (2019) contended that SfD projects for groups such as refugees need to be noncompetitive and pleasurable if they are to contribute to the wellbeing of participants. We note that what constitutes wellbeing of refugees has been contested. For example, Kohl (2020) has noted that Western notions of what constitutes wellbeing may be based on the idea that refugees need activities to help them thrive and/or to forget their situation. These notions may ignore the ways the social environment of the refugee center or the host country shape the psychological wellbeing

of refugees, perhaps more so than their experiences and context prior to coming to the center (Ryan, Dooley, and Benson 2008). An in-depth exploration of what constitutes well-being for refugees in these centers is however, beyond the scope of this paper/study (see Fennig and Denov 2019) although the need for leaders of SfD projects to be able to draw on relationship building skills remains.

The goal of the project, U on Board 'actively cultivated' (Chawansky and Carney 2017, 93) fun and enjoyment as a way to alleviate the boredom of the youth (as articulated by the administrators of the Refugee Reception Center). Fun and enjoyment in this study was based on the interpretations of SWs. They equated it with joy, laughter, eagerness of refugee youth to participate, the giving of high-fives and smiles.

Theoretical framework

We drew on Foucauldian notions of disciplinary power to understand how specific forms of knowledge about relationship building were produced through discursive practices used by the SWs. Our focus is primarily on how key social work concepts pertaining to relationship building exercise disciplining power on SWs (Garrity 2010). Epistemologically SWs have been disciplined into specific discourses about what social work is, what social workers do and how they should enact this in practice. Mackay and Zufferey (2015) in a review study, summarized the purpose of social work as it is generally taught and described by social work educators and professionals, as consisting of working to improve the quality of wellbeing of clients. The review study suggested that much of the literature on social work education contends that core values embedded in the curriculum are those pertaining to 'social justice, human dignity and worth, respect for people, integrity and competence' (p. 645). Social work educators/faculty therefore, construct regimes of truth about social work that shape their epistemology about social work and 'provide the "know how" to develop the activities and skills needed to be recognized and accepted within the discourses of social work' (p. 645). We assume the students involved in the current study had been disciplined into this knowledge. A few scholars have used a Foucauldian framework to investigate how social workers engage with discourses about the 'know how' of social work. For example, Tangenberg and Kemp (2002) used a Foucauldian lens to explore how social workers have been disciplined into 'the care and control of bodies, particularly disenfranchised bodies, [this] lies at the heart of social work's disciplinary activities' (p. 9). Others (e.g. Bulley 2017; Distinto 2020) have explored how social workers have used pastoral power in their work with immigrants and refugees to purportedly ease their assimilation into the host country. We return to and expand on this work further on.

All those who work in SfD projects, including social workers, do not come to an SfD project with a blank slate. As professionals they have been and are disciplined by techniques of power into specific knowledges and ways of thinking that become regimes of truth associated with their curriculum. Foucault (1995) called this process, dressage. This means students are disciplined into 'the correct practice of duties and all the parts of discipline. So that they all may be like one another' (Foucault 1995, p. 182). Specifically, dressage is the formation of a subject or individual through knowledge. We use the concept of dressage as a process of power through which SWs are disciplined to behave and modify *their* behavior to enact and embody 'social worker' in a professional manner. The goal of curricular dressage in any discipline is to ensure that individuals, in this case SWs, do what needs to be done when it needs to be done and in prescribed ways.

Although the ways dressage function in social work education has not been the focus of available research, it has been used in research exploring how education disciplines students in various ways. For example, Rutherford, Conway, and Murphy (2015) explored how student teachers learned to enact being a teacher and concluded that the concept of dressage aptly described how student teachers were subject to dressage by their supervisors who disciplined them into the knowledge and truths about enacting a 'teacher'. Dressage therefore, is a concept that describes the regulating and disciplining of the conduct of individuals to accomplish programmatic goals (Foucault 1995). In the current study, the programmatic goals are those that reify the values, beliefs and practices associated with being a social worker that we described earlier. 'The aim [of dressage] is to render certain activities more efficient, and furthermore to make other activities possible at all, namely the ones that will only function properly when exercised within a disciplinary framework' (Harrer 2005, p. 80). Dressage therefore is a technique of power that reinforces power/knowledge relations to normalize SWs into a certain 'ideal' way of being and to compel them to self-regulate their own conduct. This disciplinary power can produce a docile subject/SWs who is a knowledgeable professional (Rutherford, Conway, and Murphy 2015). We employed Foucault's (1995) notion of dressage to explore how these SWs were disciplined by skills and knowledges learned during their course of study and how they used them to enact 'social worker'. The SWs embedded this curricular knowledge, especially that pertaining to relationship building, into their practice of working with young refugees. The SWs drew on this knowledge so that these youth could enjoy the physical activity. SWs are not only disciplined into theoretical concepts about relationship building through dressage however, but also are involved in practical experiences where they attempted to shape the behavior of these youth using pastoral power.

Tangenberg and Kemp (2002) have argued that 'that the care and control of bodies, particularly disenfranchised bodies, lies at the heart of social work's disciplinary activities' (p. 9). The practice of shaping behavior is a form of pastoral power often used in social work including work with immigrants and refugees. Bulley (2017), for example has described how pastoral power has been used to discipline immigrants into 'suitable' behavior with the goal of them becoming self-governing subjects who follow the 'rules' of the society into which they are situated. Similarly, Distinto (2020) revealed that pastoral power played a significant role in the relationship between workers and refugees at a refugee center. He concluded that pastoral power acted as a covert assimilationist strategy used by social workers to discipline refugees who had been constructed as marginalized subjects requiring integration support.

Pastoral power is a noncoercive technology not only used by social workers but also by teachers and coaches. It consists of shaping the conduct of those who are being taught or coached (Chouliaraki 1996; McCuaig, Öhman, and Wright 2013). Specifically, in the current study, pastoral power refers to SWs drawing on their knowledge about relationship building to lead and enable refugees to be involved and have fun and enjoy the activity. SWs become the equivalent of a shepherd of the refugees, leading them like a shepherd or pastor to their participation in longboarding and simultaneously shepherding them into what the SWs seemed to have defined as 'proper' or orderly Dutch behaviour. The shepherd's role is to take care of the flock; thus it is a 'power of care' as well as control. The relationship between the shepherds (SWs) and the flock (refugee youth) is hierarchical, however (Foucault 2007). Professionals can use pastoral power to involve or attract

refugees to activities, to support them and to stimulate and encourage to facilitate their interpellation into the activity and ultimately their pleasure and physical wellbeing (Foucault 2007; McCuaig, Öhman, and Wright 2013). We therefore examined how SWs used pastoral techniques to build relationships with the refugees so that they could participate in and enjoy longboarding (Foucault 2007).

In summary, we draw on two forms of governing subjects, specifically, dressage and pastoral power (Foucault 1995, 2007) and explore how they were exerted by SWs as they engaged in relationship building with young refugees to produce fun and enjoyment. Dressage shapes or disciplines those who receive knowledge embedded in a curriculum. In the current study, the SWs were assumed to have been disciplined into techniques of relationship building in their course work. In contrast, pastoral power refers to shaping the behaviors of others. In this study the SWs used pastoral power to shape the behavior of participating youth. We recognize that distinguishing pastoral power from dressage is often not clear cut since they may overlap and coexist although the former focuses on the individual and the latter on the group/population. For example, SWs may have been disciplined (dressage) through their course of study into a regime of truth that requires them to create a positive and orderly pedagogical setting when working with youth and/or refugees. This disciplining may result in the use of forms of pastoral power by social workers to create and enforce certain rules for interactions among refugees and between refugees and social workers. We separate dressage and pastoral power in the analysis for heuristic purposes and bring them together in the discussion about how this use of discursive power contributed to participation. The research question that guided this study was: how did SWs use their social work knowledge to build relationships with young refugees to ensure they participated and enjoyed the longboarding activity?

Methods

The focus of the study was primarily on the SWs who provided the data. The study describes what the SWs saw, did, felt and heard and how they reflected on these experiences. Permission to conduct the U on Board project was given by the managing director of the RRC. The SWs that were involved in this project did so as participants in a course that focused on the complexities of realizing social justice in the Netherlands. In this 'social justice' course, students explore various issues that take place at the community level within society. The issues discussed are related to the theme of social justice, whereby students delve into various forms of both justice and injustice in the Netherlands. Themes covered in this course were: human rights, diversity, worldview/religion/philosophy, governance and policy, social class and power. The content of this course and conceptualizations of social justice were determined by the university's Department of Social Work and not the authors. The SWs who participated in U on Board, conducted research on a theme pertaining to the position of refugees in the Netherlands and subsequently, created informational videos for professionals in RRCs about the importance of sport participation and involvement for those residing in refugee centres. The video included an explanation of the U on Board project. Between September 2019 and March 2020, 33 U on Board workshop sessions were conducted by the project leader assisted by 28 (18 female and 10 male) SWs (ages 18-26), who were in their second year of study. The SWs group consisted of 22 students without an immigrant background and six with an immigrant history coming from Morocco,

Palestine, Syria, Serbia, Turkey and Somalia. Aside from their course work on social justice, the SWs received lessons and practices in longboarding by the first author. Three of the SWs showed familiarity with long- and skateboarding at the start of the project.

The SWs who chose to participate in the U on Board project were informed about its research dimension. They were asked for permission to use their observations and reflections as data for a paper with possible publication. They were told they would be cited anonymously and in ways so that the comments could not identify them and that they could withdraw their permission at any time during the course. All agreed to participate and no one withdrew their observations/reflections. In the first five weeks of the project, they were asked to use observations forms to report what they saw, their experiences and their interactions. At the end of the project, all 28 SWs turned in a cumulative observation log. Additionally, each student individually described their own reflections on working with refugees and on the development of their professional skills during the project.

Relevant text fragments from the SWs observations and reflections were sorted into topics and analysed through mutual comparison by the authors using NVivo software. This procedure continued with rearranging and revising new topics or subtopics after discussion until we had full agreement on the topics. The resulting topics were: 'collective and individual affective response', 'relationship building' and 'leading and teaching'.

Context

The refugees who find their way into the Netherlands often move through a series of Refugee Reception Centers (RRCs) while waiting for a decision on their application for asylum. These centers serve to segregate refugees from society. In addition to this segregation, refugees experience processes of displacement, alienation and vulnerability as their legal status restricts their mobility and postpones employment or education opportunities (Dempsey 2021). RRCs can therefore, be seen as spaces of waiting and as an embodiment of asylum and immigration policies that have been used to control refugees and as such, produce an oppressive and boring environment that may affect young refugees wellbeing (Stepanova 2013; Waardenburg et al. 2019). The local government called on Citizens of Center City in the Netherlands to organize activities including those in sport for and with refugees who had been placed in local RRCs. The SfD project 'U on Board' was a response to this call. U on Board is an ongoing project that aims to involve youth in physical activity and specifically, targets those defined as 'vulnerable' or 'disadvantaged' youth who do not participate in sports and physical activity. The current project focusing on refugees at a RRC was initiated by the first author who was assisted by SWs.

Young refugees who reside in a Dutch RRC stay until their request to remain in the country is honored after which they must wait for housing, or until their application is rejected after which they must leave the country. We did not assume anything about the (sport) history of the refugees participating in the project or that they needed to be taught sport skills. Instead, we based the purpose of the study on what has been established as a need by those in charge of the center: programs that counter boredom. All refugee programs in the Netherlands including U on Board, have to be approved by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers before they can be implemented. The administrator of a program, in this case the first author, also had to meet specific qualifications that made her responsible for the safety of participants and that required her to have a Certificate of 'Good' Behavior.

Spaaij et al. (2019) criticized the assumed homogeneity that may be inherent in use of the term 'refugees' since this category consists of individuals who have many different reasons for forced migration. The RRC where we conducted the study did this as well since it interchangeably labelled all those residing there as 'refugees' or 'asylum seekers'. Since our focus is on the skill set of the SWs, we do not differentiate among the residents of the RRC. We assumed and appreciated the diversity among the refugees. By diversity we mean gender, age, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, legal status, processes of displacement and resettlement, and personal history. The number and various languages spoken by the refugees often shaped the verbal ability of the SWs to communicate with the residents.

Longboarding was selected as an appropriate project best suited for the RRC based in part on the literature review that recommended noncompetitive physical activities for refugees. Longboarding is a relatively informal leisure activity that can be organised independently of an existing sports club or location and seems to appeal to youth globally although it does not have a global competitive tradition (Thorpe, Ahmad, and Williams 2018). This category of sport is associated with an emphasis on having fun rather than on competing and being active together outdoors (Smits 2019; Smits and Knoppers 2020; Thorpe 2016). Longboarding has no clothing specifications; participants can wear head scarves. These characteristics makes it easier for girls to participate.

Recent scholarship in both the SfD and forced migration/refugee literature (e.g. Schulenkorf, Sherry, and Rowe 2016; Spaaij and Jeanes 2013; Spaaij et al. 2019; Welty Peachey and Burton 2017) has recommended that participants who are the targets of sport programs be consulted about their wishes for activities and that such programs are based on collaboration between participants and leaders. A drawback of the current project was its temporary nature and its time restrictions. The population of the RRC was transient. Refugees arrived and left. The number of residents at any given time was in a state of flux. There was little time to consult with refugees about the nature of desired activities. The introduction of a longboard project meant however, that the participants began with a similar level of skill, that of beginners, that it was a leisure rather than a competitive activity, that participants were unlikely to have had an affective history of past involvement and that an activity was chosen that did not have the potential to restrict the participation of girls. The number of participants per session usually consisted of about 25 young refugees. The gender ratio was usually 50–50, but fluctuated session by session. Some young refugees were present for every session, others came to the RRC during the project and some left or moved away.

Results

Collective and individual affective response

Since the purpose of the U on Board project was to enable RRC youth to enjoy a physical activity, the SWs invested in building relationships with the young refugees to ensure this goal was reached. The resulting enjoyment or affective response was described in the reflections and observations of the SWs. Two SWs noted how the participants seemed to look forward to joining U on Board activities:

> The participants couldn't wait to longboard. While we were still in the bicycle cellar collecting and preparing the materials we would need, about 15 participants came to the materials shed to ask what time we would start. The project leader replied that we would need about

10 minutes. The children laughed and went upstairs, and later they followed us around. This really gave me a sense of joy, knowing that they were soon going to be doing what they were really looking forward to.

And:

When a young person looks at you and asks when you will come again, you know you've had an impact on their day. This gave us the feeling that we are actually making a difference and that we are contributing something of value.

The shared experiences of fun and enjoyment of SWs and participants were visible in the laughter and smiles of the participants.

Various SWs described how others in the RRC community vicariously enjoyed the U on board project. U on Board is accessible and arranged in such a way that parents can be easily involved, thus providing opportunities for shared experiences. Generally, few people living in the RRC ventured outside in the RCC. SWs were not allowed to be inside the center. A student noted: 'Everyone who enters the site immediately goes indoors and there's no one to be seen outside'. A student described how the project transformed the physical area: 'The square [behind the RCC] felt very cold. It was very grey. It didn't evoke any emotions in me. It was a really boring place. But then the square became colorful once we began the activities with all the children'. Another student described this in greater detail:

When U on Board takes place, the building seems to come alive. Curtains and windows slide open. People hang out of the window to encourage the participants. Sometimes candies are thrown out of the window. A family places a music system in front of the window to provide us with music. Parents also take photos and record videos with their mobile phones. The participants proudly wave to their parents to show how well they can already skate and longboard.

Sometimes parents were also present during the activities. As one student noted in this regard: 'The parents watched their children with pride. This gave me a warm feeling inside. Sometimes they also helped the children with longboarding'. These findings suggest the RRC was temporarily collectively transformed during the presence of U on Board. Those adults who ventured outside or were visibly involved seemed be part of the fun and enjoyment generated by the involvement of the youth. Although the current study involved a leisure activity rather than organized sport, the enjoyment of individual participants in the U on Board project was amplified by collective involvement and enjoyment that also went beyond the young participants. This is similar to what occurs in youth sport outside RRCs. Stefansen, Smette, and Strandbu (2018) found that parents vicariously enjoyed their children's participation in sport. Possibly then the vicarious participation by parents in youth sporting and physical activities may in part, depend not so much on the nature of the activity but on the expressions of enjoyment and pleasure by their children.

Parents were not always in the picture, however, and many refugee children and youth participated on their own. Interactions led to mutual pleasure for refugees and SWs. A student reflected on this enjoyment:

The whole project has been a meaningful situation for me, because the participants became so enthusiastic and genuinely happy with the activities we organized as U on Board. During the activities, we proved our relevance to the participants in the RRC, because this allowed them to forget reality for a while and just have fun together.

This SWs did not check this assumption of 'forgetting reality' during the project with the refugees and reflects the notion that 'activation' programs are 'good' for refugees because it enables them to temporarily forget their past and present challenges (Kohl 2020; Ryan, Dooley, and Benson 2008). Such unchecked assumptions may also reflect a noncritical dimension of a curriculum, that disciplines students into noncontextual regimes of truth about relationship building (Foucault 1995; Rutherford, Conway, and Murphy 2015).

Relationship building

The SWs gave specific examples of how they tried to create relationships with refugees to ensure the activities were pleasurable for the participants. For example, a student wrote:

> There was a girl of around 15 years old who didn't want to participate at first. But I eventually got her to briefly stand on one of the longboards. She almost fell off and was instantly afraid of falling again. She gestured that she didn't want to and couldn't do it again. In the end, together with her friends, I was able to persuade her to participate. From then on, she returned to every session with her friends.

Fear of falling did play a role in how participants responded to invitations by the SWs to engage in longboarding. Some participants were at first afraid to fall and hurt themselves while longboarding. The SWs seemed to be aware of their professional position as being in a supportive role to deal with this and other fears. A student reflected on this:

> In practice, it is essential to form trusting relationships with participants. You can only make a difference as a social worker once you know how to gain their trust. During the U on Board activities, I realized how important it is to first establish a sense of trust with a group, if you want to contribute and achieve certain goals.

This is an example of how the students enacted social work principles as dressage. SWs are and have been disciplined into a social work way of thinking that focuses on the need for social work act in ways that are perceived to contribute to social justice. Another student described how she gained (pastoral) trust by giving the participants compliments and positive attention and by using both verbal and non-verbal gestures:

> From previous meetings I knew that the participant in question liked to dance. To break the ice, I started singing a melody. The participant responded by starting to dance. Because we were both dancing and singing together, I gained his trust and eventually we got on longboards together. As a result, I discovered that the language barrier does not have to be a barrier during expressive social activities.

The examples above show that the SWs looked for ways to build relationships, primarily based on nonverbal communication and using pastoral power. The SWs constructed these relationships or temporal encounters as trusting relations. The definitions of trust are however, based solely on the interpretations of the SWs who seem to have based this conclusion on the actions of the youth such as their willingness to attempt the activity while coping with a fear of falling and to hold the hand of a SWs.

Communicating

The SWs tried to approach relationship building from the perspective of the other/the refugee. They were disciplined by their social work education that emphasized the need for SWs to develop verbal and nonverbal communication skills in order to be 'present' as the following quotations suggest.

> You don't always know what a participant has gone through in his or her country of origin or during their journey to the Netherlands. So, I thought it was very important to take that into account. The participants could be easily confronted with these issues, without even realizing it. For me, it was important to have fun, but also to adopt a professional attitude. Don't get too close, remain sensitive and cautious, wait and see what happens, because you can't predict how they might react. All the while, continue to offer support and help them with the longboard sessions so as to provide them with afternoons of fun.

When verbal communication did not work, the students tried non-verbal methods. A student recounted:

> I quickly learned that the language barrier was a problem for me. It caused me to be reserved and wait for the participants to approach me. When I tried to put myself in the position of a female participant, I suddenly realized that it's entirely logical that she didn't approach me, and that I needed to approach her. I tried to imagine living in a foreign country, where you don't speak the language and where you don't know the culture. I myself would not easily interact with someone with whom I may not be able to communicate well. It's really important to be involved with the participants, especially by actively participating with them and communicating with gestures and sounds. That's when I understood why it is so important as a professional to reach out and initiate the interaction.

Similarly, a student explained how he tried to be very careful and sensitive: 'I learned to adopt an approach that suits them best; a careful, calm and gentle approach that made them feel at ease and confident enough to have fun'. Due to the language barrier the SWs were not able to verbally confirm these assumptions. They relied on what they saw: pleasure and enjoyment.

The SWs also took the time to reflect on their way of communicating: 'I observed how a child reacted. I regularly had to stop to think about the appropriate way to proceed, and why. This experience taught me how important it is to regularly reflect on your own actions'. Besides practicing being sensitive, the SWs also discovered they could build relationships based on age.

Peer to peer interaction

A student used what had been taught in course work to explain how peer interaction based on age similarity worked:

> It turned out that a refugee and I shared a number of common interests and that we were roughly the same age. This resulted in what is referred to as 'peer to peer' or 'peer activation'. Peer activation stands for making contact with peers of the same age group, thus allowing us to gain access to hard-to-reach target groups.

Another student commented: 'During our conversations, I noticed that they [refugees] became increasingly motivated [to participate]. This is a form of positive 'peer activation'. This reference to peer-to-peer activation suggests these students had internalized what had

been taught in social work courses. This internalization illustrates how dressage shaped the knowledge of the SWs.

The SWs used what they perceived to be peer activation, to pastorally 'motivate' the refugees. It is unclear if they checked this assumption with the refugees. While the SWs engaged in what they called peer bonding or peer activation to motivate the youth, they also used a form of pastoral power to create a structure that could shape the conduct of the young refugees. Building a stable structure required the SWs to develop their improvisation skills. A student described the challenge of doing so:

> Sometimes it was difficult to provide structure because every day was different, due to weather conditions or the number of participants who showed up for the activities. Knowing how to improvise is an important skill, and I was able to improve in this regard during this practicum.

Constructing improvisation as an important skill mirrors how SWs have been disciplined by their course work. This dressage was visible in other constructs as well, for example in being present.

Being present

In their reflections on relationship building, the SWs often mentioned their use of the 'presence approach'. The SWs had been taught that it means being attentive and committed to the other, to learn to see what is at stake for the other. Two SWs explained that:

> The presence approach means, among other things, that you enter into a conversation without an agenda, that you pay attention to the other person's story and seek to connect with them and empathize with their position. I not only listened carefully but also watched their reactions and took note of the intonation in their voices to better understand their stories.

Another SWs explained:

> For me, the presence approach is simply about being there for someone, so that they feel welcome, seen and heard. I unconditionally accepted the children in the RRC, they were able to experience their own strength and they gained confidence in the activities.

An SWs explained the presence approach in greater detail:

> There are a number of criteria for how to apply the presence approach: 1) 'Attentive involvement' means showing interest in the things people are involved in'. 2) 'Connecting' means that you enter the world of the other and that you adapt to what the other says and does; 3) 'Trust and listening': Despite the language barrier, we always took time to listen to the children. We tried many different ways to comprehend and understand each other. We did this by speaking either Dutch or English, but also by using photos. But more than anything, we communicated using gestures. The participants also saw us as their guides when something went wrong. If certain children were being left out of an activity, they would come to us to voice their frustration. They could count on us at that moment.

Again, we note that these perceptions belong to the SWs who attributed their use of the presence approach to the outcomes or behaviors they saw. They were unable or did not think to confirm the veracity of these constructions of refugee confidence and trust (Sigona 2014). This is an example of how the objectification of young refugees by SWs may be embedded in the content of dressage and pastoral power that is part of curricular learning.

This power of the curriculum also may create docile subjects (SWs) who do not learn to critically reflect on curricular content. The objectification of refugees was not total however, as the SWs did reflect on their own ways of building relationships with the refugees as we show in the following section.

Leading and teaching

Role modelling

The building of relationships resulted in the participants calling the SWs 'teachers', suggesting they were seen as role models. Role modeling is a disciplinary technology of pastoral power that provides a structure for the conduct of participants (McCuaig, Öhman, and Wright 2013). This role modelling was embodied by the SWs. In this sense, SWs became shepherds or benign conductors, who led the flock (participants) (Ekholm and Dahlstedt 2020). The following is an example of how this relationship building created a certain amount of trust between a role model (student) and a refugee:

> One participant came up to me, calling me 'teacher' and wanted to show how well she could longboard. Then she wanted to hold my hands while longboarding. She couldn't make any turns at first but when I explained (leaning forward on toes and back on heels) she tried this out, while still holding on to my hands. She kept making better turns and she began to get the hang of it. She really wanted to learn and listened to all the suggestions I made; [she became] a real enthusiastic and motivated longboard star!

Although the participants called the SWs 'teachers', suggesting the relationship between refugees and SWs was hierarchical, dialogues based on the presence approach at times created mutual respect between SWs as 'teacher-learners' and participants as 'learner-teachers'. A student described what she learned from a 10-year-old girl about her life in her home country Afghanistan:

> 'There is always fire, not only today, but also tomorrow and the day after tomorrow'. She told me how fire dominated both her and her mother's life. She shared her fear and gave me a clear picture of life in a war zone.

Another student connected what she had learned from the project to principles that she had been taught:

> Working on this project has helped me realize why the right to leisure and play is so important and that it should be a priority. Children often discover the world through play, and they develop as a result. The importance of play is often not recognized. As social workers, we have to dedicate ourselves to this.

Another student echoed this principle: 'During this project we learned that every young person has the right to play and exercise, but it is difficult for the youth at the RRC to gain access to this right. This creates social inequality'.

The ways in which these SWs draw on discourses that reflect what they have been taught such as the discourse of the right to play and the ideal role of social work professionals, shows how they have been disciplined into this professional knowledge and are aware that this RRC did not always engage in practices geared towards social justice. The SWs, however, did not question why this RRC was complicit in denying access to play. Dempsey (2021) has pointed to unavailability of objects that encourage play reflect Dutch policies governing

RRCs. This disciplining is an example of Foucauldian (2007) dressage. They accepted what they saw without critical reflection on why this denial of right to play occurred.

In their reflections, SWs noted on how they themselves also changed as they drew on curricular knowledge to build relationships with the young refugees. Two SWs describe this change:

> All in all, I started to think more in terms of the children's potential. I would ask them what they could do themselves, and if there was a language barrier, I made use of gestures and images. As a result, I began to see where the children needed support to do certain things themselves, instead of thinking that I needed to do things for them. As a social worker, you thus contribute to self-reliance so that the children ultimately show initiative and take control of their situation.

And:

> In one of the first lessons we gave, I noticed that I still had to find out how best to explain the assignments, because they did not speak Dutch or English very well. I was faced with the dilemma of whether to keep speaking in Dutch, so that they would learn the language better, or to work with gestures to make the assignment clearer. Eventually, I figured out that sometimes if I explained something in gestures or with simple wording, I could achieve more clarity and then the participants would further explain it to each other. I eventually settled on working with short Dutch words and gestures.

Freire (1990), a defender of critical pedagogy for use in development projects or programs, argued that 'there is a particular pedagogy natural to social work where the social worker is in the forefront in the search for a clear understanding in coming to known certain subject matter' (p. 5). Central to his 'particular pedagogy' is the use of empowering educational methods that respect the individual as an equal. Above examples reveal how the SWs tried to understand the subject matter and to discern how to communicate and treat the participants as equals. When there were conflicts however, the SWs used pastoral care and control to take on a hierarchical position as we show below.

Dealing with conflict

The enthusiasm for using the mini-ramps often meant the youth had to wait their turn, which sometimes produced irritation. SWs took the lead, like shepherds, and guided the participants in ways to handle this. A student described how they taught the youth to line up to take turns using a ramp:

> Some participants pushed in front [of others]. I and a fellow student indicated to them that they should politely join the back of the line. Because we ended up using the phrase 'back of the line' quite often, the children also started using this phrase when they noticed a child pushing in front [and wanted to stop that].

In this way, the students engaged in a form of pastoral power to encourage the participants to adhere to the rules to make it a fun activity for everyone. The SWs had a guiding and facilitating role, in which they made pedagogical choices and implemented these as professionals.

A student gave another example what happened when the children had to wait their turn when the helmet color of their choice or their preferred type of board (skateboard, longboard or cruiser) was not available at that moment:

> I had to try to explain to a girl that there were no more cruisers and longboards and that we had to wait for the older participants to finish. She was sitting with her hands folded and an angry look on her face. I walked over to her and tried to explain with gestures that they would leave in five minutes and that then she could play. She nodded, but was still not happy. I had to try to explain to her in a subtle way that she was going to get her chance, because I didn't want her to feel excluded. This is very challenging.

As shown in this paragraph, the use of this form of pastoral power relied on a hierarchy in which the young refugees were seen and treated at times as sheep while the shepherds guided them into what they constructed as proper behavior during the U on Board sessions. Chouliaraki (1996) has argued that the teaching of good habits by teachers serves as a disciplinary technology of pastoral power and may mean that teachers assume behaving 'properly' is more important than teaching or discussing the purpose for these behaviors. This neglect in teaching the purpose of 'orderliness' also occurred in the current study. The young refugees were assumed to need to be changed so they could function in Dutch society (if they are permitted to stay). They were not constructed as individuals able to regulate themselves into behaving according to Dutch norms; they were also not asked to submit ideas about ways to regulate access to the equipment. This finding is also reflected in Distinto's (2020) research on RRCs in the Netherlands. He found that social workers used forms of pastoral power in their attempt to discipline refugees into Dutch norms for behavior.

While these young refugees were regulated through the SWs use of pastoral power, the SWs themselves were regulated or disciplined by the curriculum through the power exerted by dressage. The principles that the SWs used to implement in their use of pastoral power seemed to be based on their compliance with what they had learned in their course work about relationship building and being a professional, more so than becoming champions for social justice. The employment of forms of pastoral power flowed from the dressage that SWs had experienced in their general course work. This possible connection between dressage and pastoral power has thus far received little attention in the available scholarly literature in education and in SfD and similar projects and needs further exploration to add to understandings of their complexity .

Discussion and conclusion

The results reveal how an analysis of power relations, that is, the employment of a Foucauldian framework, may add to understandings of how relationship building and producing enjoyment and fun are intertwined. Although pastoral power may often be construed as primarily being a dynamic of control, the results suggest it can simultaneously be used in a caring and positive manner as occurred in relationship building by SWs with young refugees (Tudor 2020). The SWs participating in the current study had been disciplined through dressage into 'good' practices such as being present, being attentive and engaging in peer activation that were forms of pastoral care. Specifically, the data suggest young refugees at this RRC were the objects of pastoral care by SWs who had learned how to enact it through forms of social work dressage.

The results suggest the academic curriculum background of the SWs may have disciplined SWs into compliance with social work practices pertaining to relationship building as they worked with refugees during the project. The SWs complied with dominant discourses about doing social work and enacting 'social worker'. The SWs worked on building positive

relationships with the refugees using forms of pastoral power to apply principles they had learned in their social work education by way of dressage. These results reflect the findings of Rutherford, Conway, and Murphy (2015) who examined how teachers used dressage to enact 'teacher'. Similar to the SWs in our study, teachers drew on 'resources such as reflection, reflexivity in practice and professional norms that are presented by powerful institutional tools. Self-production is the result of interaction and participation, willing or unwilling…' (p. 328). This reflectivity by the SWs was however, primarily based on their own practices in relationship building with the refugees at the RRC. There was limited evidence of SWs engaging in reflexivity about social justice for refugees while this was the rubric under which they were involved in this project.

The reflections of the SWs showed relatively little emotional investment in or affective attachment to sport and physical activity. Their lack of a personal history in physical education or sport coaching courses may have enabled these SWs to focus on relationship building that could produce enjoyment rather than emphasizing achievement in progressions of skill development and competitions as may occur in SfD projects (e.g. Kidd 2011; Válková 2021; Zipp, Smith, and Darnell 2019). The findings suggest staff members for SfD need to engage in critical self-reflection to grasp how their previous training and curricular background could enhance or detract from relationship building with participants. An understanding of the concepts of dressage and pastoral power may contribute to this critical self-reflection. This critical self-reflection needs to include exploring how relationship building with participants in an SfD project can produce what Tudor (2020) called 'positive power' and may result in enjoyment for those engaging in physical activity.

Note

1. For the purpose of this paper, we place all sport projects targeting immigrants, refugees, socially disadvantaged and vulnerable youth under the umbrella of the term SfD.

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ORCID

Annelies Knoppers http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5247-9488
Froukje Smits http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5408-3639

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