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Sport Participation Research Initiative Doctoral Award

Reflections on Community-Based Research Approaches on LGBTQ2S Recreational Sport

Research has documented multiple negative experiences LGBTQ2S people experience in traditional sports and athletic spaces. In contrast with this often violent history of homophobia and transphobia in sports, there is a 50+ year history of LGBTQ2S recreational sports leagues and teams, operated for and by LGBTQ2S people and communities in Canada. The majority of these LGBTQ2S recreational sports teams and leagues are found in large urban centers, in almost every province across the country and represent thousands of amateur athletic participants. Despite their size, these community sports organizations remain volunteer-run, and operate externally from any formal community centres or other community support agencies.

This paper will focus on methodological insights from planning a community consultation, as part of launching a broader community-based research project, with LGBTQ2S recreational sports teams and leagues in Vancouver, Canada. Community-based research (CBR) is an approach to research that is done in partnership with the communities whose experiences are being explored. CBR should not only center the needs and wants of the community, to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship and improve the conditions of the community, but also interrogate and redistribute power dynamics inherent to researcher/researched relationships. This paper will focus on challenges engaging community athletic organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as opportunities for CBR methods to highlight the sporting experiences of LGBTQ2S recreational athletes. The future study this consultation informs will probe the benefits of participation in LGBTQ2S recreational sports as well as the barriers that diverse communities of LGBTQ2S people face to participation.