Integration in sport and empowerment of athletes with a disability

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Introduction

The International Paralympic Sport Science Committee has listed empowerment, here defined as as a priority research topic within the area of disability sport (Sherrill and Wilhite, 1995). Empowerment is here defined as: "the process by which individuals develop skills and abilities to gain control over their lives and to take action to improve their life situation" (Gutierrez, 1990). Disability is a social construction that in general refers to an unwanted way of being different (Goffman, 1963; Sherrill, 1990). Even if many individuals with a disability do not feel negative about their condition, they are often seen as a disadvantaged minority and are as such subjected to stigmatisation, generalisation and stereotyping (Williams, 1994). This makes an empowerment perspective viable as a framework for research in the area of disability sport. The purpose of this article is to examine some aspects of sport as an empowering context for those who participate, with a special emphasis on athletes with a disability.

There is a trend in the western world to promote integration of individuals with disabilities, also in sport. Sport has been credited with teaching positive values and building of character and physique. On the other hand, sport has also been criticised for being overly focused on performance enhancement and being indifferent to both the role of sport as a cultural practice, as well as the physical and psychosocial consequences for the athletes (Sage, 1992). If disability sport is integrated in ordinary sport, the question is how such positive or negative aspects will affect the sport experience for individuals with a disability. How integration affects the empowerment of athletes with a disability in the sport context will therefore be an underlying theme in this article.

Disability sport and integration

Disability sport refers to all types of sport where individuals with a disability participate in organised sport, whether it is in an integrated or disability specific setting. In general, integration refers to a process of making parts into a whole. In this particular context, I am referring to the aim of the Norwegian Sports Confederation, which is that the ordinary sports federations take the responsibility for sport for individuals with a disability, instead of having separate organisations for disability sport.

Integration of individuals with a disability is nothing new in Norwegian sport. Individuals with a disability have trained in regular sport clubs for many years, and events for people with and without disability together have occurred.
However, in 1996 the Sports Confederation made a commitment to work systematically for a total integration of disability sport. The process is in its beginning, and as a first step all the disability sport organisations were merged into one organisation. This organisation will organise disability sport that are not yet taken care of by the regular sport federations, but the long term goal is to make it superfluous. So far four sport federations have assumed the full responsibility for disability sport, and another fifteen federations have integrated athletes with a disability in some of their activities. Although the disability sport organisations agreed and to some extent initiated this process, the decision made in 1996 has been met with varied reactions from many individuals. Among the arguments against the way the process is going, is that the athletes with a disability may experience loss of empowerment because the control of disability sport is taken over by people without disability, and that disability sport may lose visibility. Arguments on the positive side are that sport should follow and support the general trend of integration in society, and that top level athletes with a disability get access to better qualified coaches.

Empowerment

Empowerment has become a popular concept. Religious/spiritual societies, the World Bank, feminist action groups, health and gender researchers, governments, United Nations and development agencies, have all put empowerment on their agenda. The result is multiple meanings and interpretations associated with a variety of strategies. A central element in empowerment is power, which is connected to authority, domination and/or exploitation. A distinction is made between power as embodied in structures, i.e. control over resources (physical, human, intellectual, financial and the self), and control over ideology (beliefs, attitudes, values) (Sen & Presser, 2000). The concept of empowerment reflects a humanistic basis and is rooted in a "social action" and "self-help" ideology (Freire, 1970; Kiefer, 1984, Rappaport, 1981). This implies a belief that given opportunities and resources, people will develop abilities and skills in order to ensure survival and the best possible life for both individuals and the community. If they do not, it is because social structures and/or lack of resources limit the possibilities to utilise and develop their competencies (Rappaport, 1987). In an empowerment perspective the concern is to facilitate and free resources to develop self-corrective capacities (Rappaport, 1987).

Empowerment through the sport context

Hutzler (1990) introduced the empowerment perspective in the area of disability sport. He described a model of sports-based empowerment, which linked empowerment to concepts such as self-efficacy and perceived competence. The goal according to his model is that through the sport experience the individual should acquire control over personal and environmental resources in order to provide competencies usually deprived through disability (Hutzler & Bar-Eli, 1993; Hutzler & Sherrill, 1999; Sherrill, 1997). Hutzler focused on the individual level of empowerment. It is, however, important to note that empowerment operates both at individual, group or organisational, and societal levels (Perkins, 1995). The development of disability sport, for instance, has clearly empowered disability athletes on more levels than the individual by recognition of their organisations, and by an increased attention and influence in society at large (Blinde & McClung, 1997; Sorensen, 2000). Therefore, based on theory and a qualitative study, we extended the model of empowerment through the sport context to include individual, group and societal levels as can be seen in figure 1 (Pensgaard & Sørensen, 2002).

In order to examine sport as an empowering context, we need to recognise the characteristics of an empowered individual, group or society. An empowered individual has a sense of efficacy and control and is motivated for participation (Zimmerman, 1990). An empowered group or organisation is characterised by shared leadership, a willingness to share power and resources, a sense of group identity among the members and group efficacy. Within the world of sport, we have seen that disability sport organizations have the power to develop and organise sport on their own terms (e.g. goal ball for individuals with visual impairments and sledge racing for those who cannot ski). Through
these activities, respect for skills and competencies have been gained. An empowered society comprises empowered groups and a democratic opportunity to take part in decisions. Empowerment is both a goal and a process, so we need to identify factors that influence empowerment. This influence may occur as a process of moderation of empowerment, meaning that some variables will affect the strength and possibly the direction of empowerment, e.g. gender, social class, or type of disability (Baron & Kenny, 1986). On the other hand, empowerment may also be affected by internal processes and aspects of the context that mediate the experience of empowerment, e.g. sense of identity, self-efficacy or the motivational climate in the sports club. In our model we have labelled these moderators and mediators, and for more details about the selection of moderators and mediators, the reader is referred to Pensgaard & Sørensen (2002).

Theoretical considerations for the variables included in this article

The complexity of the empowerment concept is both its strength and its problem. As pointed out by Pensgaard & Sørensen (2002) it is not realistic to capture the complexity of the model in one single study. Initially, a systematic examination of the different aspects of the model will hopefully provide a more comprehensive understanding. As a start, we chose to focus on the topics described in the following:

1) Individual empowerment was included as both general empowerment (which is a general belief that people can influence their surroundings), perceptions of external control and empowerment self-esteem (the individual perception of being able to take charge of one's own life), and sport specific empowerment (how much one believe that sport can contribute to empowerment). We also included questions about empowerment for individuals with a disability on a group and societal level.

2) Among the moderators, we looked at type and duration of the disability, age and gender as well as sport participation in integrated, segregated and both settings.

![Figure 1: Empowerment through sport (Pensgaard & Sørensen, 2002).](image-url)
3) Among the mediators we examined aspects of identity, task and ego goal orientation as well as perception of a performance or mastery climate. The theoretical rationale for including these aspects were:

**Identity**: The development of an identity progresses through different stages. We used Eriksson's (1968) definition of identity, which maintains that identity is an individuals way of organising all past and present identifications, attributes, desires and orientations that the individual believes best represents the self. The final stage of the identity process is that of a synthesis, where the various aspects of the identity (e.g. disability or athletic) are united and accepted as parts of a whole (Cass, 1984). Whether or not a person has integrated the disability as part of the identity will be of importance for empowerment on the individual level. In sport, it is not likely that an athlete with a disability can perform at quite the same level as their able bodied counterparts, unless the disability is minor, or one is engaged in a type of sport where the disability does not make a difference for sport performance. Therefore, it is important to accept the reason for a difference in performance. For empowerment on a group level, identification with others in the same situation is necessary.

**Motivational orientation and climate**: It is self evident that motivational processes are important for empowerment when an individual approaches an achievement context such as sport. A theoretical framework that has played an influential role within sport psychology research is the achievement goal approach developed by Nicholls (1989). A basic assumption in this theory is that when one enters an achievement setting, the main feature is to develop or to demonstrate competence. Typically, two forms of goals have been distinguished, task and ego. When a person has a task goal perspective, the concern is to demonstrate improvement and mastery of the task, and the criteria for success are self-referenced (Nicholls, 1989). When a person has an ego goal perspective, the concern is to demonstrate superiority and competence compared to others, and the criteria for success are other-referenced.

A considerable amount of research have revealed that whether a person is ego or task involved, combined with high or low perception of ability, is related to specific cognitive, affective and also behavioural patterns (see Duda, 1993, Roberts, Treasure and Kavassanu, 1997 for reviews), such as anxiety or coping, persistence or drop out. Therefore, we hypothesised that unless the ability is high, an ego orientation will not be associated with perceived empowerment, whereas a task orientation will be associated with perception of empowerment at an individual level. Hutzler, Fliess, Chacham and Van den Auweele (2002) addressed this issue in a study of children with disabilities in physical education. They recommended that in order for empowerment to take place, children need to be challenged "with tasks they need to achieve, even though success will require much effort. This seems to be particularly important for high ego, low task oriented children, who might otherwise refrain from participation and apply an opportunistic attitude (i.e., only participate if gratification is expected)." (p. 312). According to the hypothesis described above, this should be based on the assumption that the perceived ability is high.

How a person perceives the motivational climate extant in the sport setting has also shown to have an influence on cognitive and affective correlates (Duda, 1993). Two types of climate are typically described (Ames & Archer, 1986), namely a mastery and a performance climate. A mastery climate is characterised by a clear focus on learning and improvement, and mistakes are viewed as a natural part of the learning process. A performance climate on the other hand is focused on normative criteria for learning, social comparison, and a strong focus on winning. Perceptions of a predominantly performance climate combined with moderate levels of perceived ability is associated with higher perceptions of distress (Pensgaard and Roberts, 1999), and lower intrinsic motivation (Treasure, 1995), while a mastery climate is associated with adaptive learning strategies (Ommundsen, Roberts and Kavassanu, 1998). Thus, the type of motivational climate a person perceives within the sport context may also have consequences for empowerment.

A precise operationalisation of empowerment is a challenge because it depends so much on the contextual premises
(Zimmerman, 1990). Research within an empowerment framework in the sport context should study different sport settings where people with disabilities are empowered, in order to learn how it works. This speaks for a qualitative methodological approach. If an empowerment perspective is chosen as a theoretical framework, emphasis must be placed on the special circumstances each context yields. Herein is also a challenge to integrate theories and methods from other disciplines in order to gain more knowledge (Zimmerman, 1990). One option is to combine a qualitative and quantitative research approach, where the aim of the quantitative approach is to confirm on a larger scale what has been revealed through the qualitative part, which is what is presented in this article. A qualitative study served as a basis for the selection of the elements included in the model. The development of the model and the qualitative study are presented elsewhere (Pensgaard & Sørensen, 2002; Sørensen & Pensgaard, 1999a). Therefore, the qualitative study is not presented in full here, but some data are used to illustrate elements that we followed up in the empirical study. The study tried to answer the following question: What are the relationships between empowerment and aspects of identity, perceived ability, motivational orientation and motivational climate for athletes with and without disability?

Methods

Qualitative study. Participants and procedures:

An expert panel consisting of five athletes (four men and one woman, all white) with many years of participation both in top-level sport, other competitive sport and recreational exercise, took part in this study. These athletes were strategically selected because they had participated both in integrated and segregated sport settings and represented different types of disabilities (one blind, one visually impaired, one with polio, one with cerebral palsy and one with both arms amputated). They were between 30 and 66 years of age, and three had congenital disabilities and two had acquired disabilities (at 13 years of age and at 17 years of age). The interviews were semi-structured and lasted one to two hours. The focus of the interviews was what sport had meant in the lives of these athletes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed and then returned to the informants for comments and corrections. No major changes were made in this process.

Study of athletes in clubs. Participants and procedures:

In 1998 we investigated a sample of 248 athletes in Norwegian sports clubs that had experience with individuals with a disability. Due to restrictions in keeping registers with sensitive personal data, getting contact with athletes with a disability is a challenge in itself, as our legislation protects registration of that type of information. We therefore contacted leaders in sport clubs that were registered by the Confederation of Sports as offering activities for people with disability, and asked them to distribute questionnaires that were returned by mail. In clubs with members both with and without a disability, we asked the leaders to give the questionnaire to approximately twice the number of members without a disability in order to balance the numbers from those clubs with disability groups only. The data cannot be said to be representative for neither group because the total population of disability sport athletes as such is not known. We also do not know the number of able-bodied sport club members who have been active together with individuals with a disability.

In the sample from the sports clubs, 151 individuals had a disability of various types and degrees and 96 were without disability. 1 person did not give information. Three individuals reported to have a disability without specifying the type. There were 108 females and 138 males, 2 did not give information about sex. In analyses involving sex and disability, the individuals that did not provide information about these variables, were excluded from the analyses. Age was ranging from 8 to 78 years, mean age 33.2 years. They took part in 26 different sports including health sport clubs (mainly for people with disabilities). One hundred and six of the participants engaged in more than one sport, and 117 trained more than two times a week, and the majority (94%) had been active more for than 2 years. There were both exercisers (N= 96, 38.7%)
and athletes who were competing (N=152, 60.9%), 23 (9.3%) on an International level, 45 (18.1%) on a National level, and 63 (25.4%) on a regional level. Among those who had a disability, the types of disability are shown in table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of disability</th>
<th>1998 (N = 151)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blind or visual</td>
<td>6 (4.0 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf or hearing</td>
<td>50 (32.9 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair</td>
<td>29 (19.3 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amputees</td>
<td>3 (1.9 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerebral Palsy</td>
<td>27 (17.9 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other disabilities</td>
<td>34 (22.6 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No information</td>
<td>3 (1.9 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Types of disabilities in the 1998 sample.

Those with a disability participated either in an integrated setting (N=26), in a disability group (N=60), or both (N=48), seventeen individuals did not provide that information.

**Measures**

**Empowerment.** For measures of empowerment, we used a scale developed by Rogers et al. (1997) to measure the personal construct of empowerment as defined by consumers of mental health services. Validity of this scale has been demonstrated by the scores being related to quality of life measures and inversely related to use of mental health services, but not related to age, gender education level or employment status (Rogers et al., 1997). The original scale had 28 items and consisted of five factors: empowerment self-esteem, powerlessness (or general empowerment), community activism, righteous anger, and control over the future (external control). For our purpose, we used the subscales of general empowerment (3 items), empowerment self-esteem (12 items), and external control (5 items). The internal consistency for these scales in our sample was demonstrated by Cronbach alpha coefficients of .76 for general empowerment, .89 for the empowerment self-esteem, and .67 for the external control subscale. The responses were indicated on a five point Likert-type scale ranging from "totally agree" to "totally disagree".

"When people go together they can influence the community around them" is an example of the general empowerment items. "I am a capable person" is an example of the empowerment self-esteem items, and "experts know what is best" is an example of the external control items.

**Sports specific empowerment.** (how much one believe that sport contribute to empowerment) was measured by a scale we developed in a pilot study of 186 students of physical education (Sørensen & Pensgaard, 1999). The general empowerment scale was used as a basis, but we constructed 8 sport specific items inspired by the qualitative study, like "participation in sport builds confidence" or "sport provides mastery experiences". Internal consistency for this scale was demonstrated by a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .87. As indicators of empowerment on group and societal levels, the participants indicated their perceptions of how well people with a disability are heard as a group in sport and in society at large on a four point scale ranging from not at all to very much.

**Identity.** We measured identity as an athlete by the athletic identity measurement scale (AIMS) (Brewer, Van Raalte and Linder, 1993). Research has provided general support for the psychometric qualities of AIMS by test-retest reliability (r= .89 over a two week period) and internal consistency (Chronbach alphas = .81 to .93) Validity of the scale has been demonstrated by the scores increasing with level of sport involvement and perceived importance of sports competence (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993; Good et al., 1993). There has been some debate whether AIMS has subscales or should be treated as a unidimensional scale. Three subscales have been identified: social identity as an athlete, exclusivity, and negative affects. However, the authors have argued for a unidimensional solution and provided support for this (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993), so we investigated both solutions. We also included ratings (from 1 to 10) of how much the participants thought about themselves in various roles (among them as a person with a disability, and athlete) as well as an indication of which aspect of their identity they considered the most important.
**Group identity.** Group identity was measured by ratings (from 1 to 10) of how much the participants identified themselves with various groups, among them people with disability and able bodied.

**Motivational orientation and climate.** Task and ego orientation was measured by a Norwegian version of Perception Of Success Questionnaire (POSQ) (Roberts, Treasure and Balague, 1998). POSQ has demonstrated acceptable internal consistency in research with Norwegian participants (Cronbach alpha .81 for task orientation, and .79 for ego orientation) (Roberts & Ommundsen, 1996). Examples of items are "In sport I feel the most successful when I achieve my personal goals" for task orientation and "In sport I feel the most successful when I win" for ego orientation.

**Perceived motivational climate.** was measured with a translated version of the Perception of Motivational Climate Questionnaire (PMCQ) (Seifriz, Duda & Chi, 1992). This scale has demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency with Cronbach alpha coefficients of .84 for the performance subscale and .80 for the mastery subscale (Seifriz, Duda & Chi, 1992). The scale has been translated and validated for use in Norwegian (Ommundsen, Roberts and Kavassanu, 1998). Examples of items are "Our club is best described by the coach giving attention to the best players " for performance climate, and "Effort is rewarded" for mastery climate. Responses are indicated on 5-point Likert-type scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree for both scales.

**Statistical analyses.** Differences between athletes with and without disabilities were analysed with t- test, Pearson's chi-square, or a non-parametric test (Kruskal Wallis chi-square) where appropriate, differences between levels of competition and disability groups (collapsed into 4 main groups) with a one-way ANOVA. Level of significance was set a priori at 95% (p < .05). Individuals, who had not provided the necessary information on some variables, were automatically excluded from the analyses. In order to establish the associations between the perceptions of the motivational climate and empowerment, a canonical correlation analysis was performed.

**Results and discussion**

- **Empowerment**

  Asking the athletes in the qualitative study what sport had meant to them, all of them focused on the instrumental importance of their sport participation for empowerment:

  "You increase your self confidence by experiencing that you can accomplish things, so you get stronger beliefs that you can do other things, too. It gives you a strength in everyday life, too, that makes you dare to push yourself a little more forward" (female, CP, interview 3)

  "In sport I learned a lot of practical things that are very important for arranging your life as a person with a disability - it has been important physically, too, but also later when I worked more as a representative and in the administration, I learned a lot that I use in my job today" (male, polio, interview 1)

The qualitative study demonstrated clearly that the sport environment can be empowering for the individual with a disability in various ways. Together with the theoretical considerations, this was the background for including both general and sport specific measures of empowerment as well as empowerment self-esteem in the empirical study.

The scores on the empowerment scales in the sports clubs sample are presented in table2:

On the general empowerment scale the athletes with a disability scored lower than the able bodied athletes (t = -2.096, df = 242, p = .037). The athletes with a disability also scored significantly higher on the external control subscale than the able bodied athletes (t = -2.116, df = 239, p = .035), indicating that the athletes with a disability experienced less general empowerment and more external control than their able-bodied counterparts. The sport-specific empowerment measure and empowerment self esteem, however, demonstrated no differences between athletes with and without a disability. There were no significant differences on any of
the measures as to gender, participation in integrated, segregated or both setting, or between the different types of disability. There was an age difference only on sport specific empowerment ($F=3.187$, $df=3$, $p=.025$), and a Bonferroni post hoc test showed that the age group between 30 and 40 years scored somewhat lower on the sport specific empowerment than the other groups. The differences in individual empowerment were supported by answers to the questions about how well the disability groups are heard in the sports club, and in society in general as demonstrated in figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>With a disability (N = 151)</th>
<th>Able-bodied (N = 96)</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General empowerment</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.037*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports empowerment</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.42 NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment self-esteem</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.19 NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External control</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.035*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego orientation</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.37 NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task orientation</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.08 NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance climate</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>0.022*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery climate</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.55 NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Mean scores on empowerment measures, motivational orientation and motivational climate, in the 1998 sample from the sports clubs.

This supports the findings from the empowerment scales, and may demonstrate that disability challenges general empowerment, but that sport may function as an empowering arena for people with a disability individually and as a group. This is in line with other findings on an individual level (Hutzler & Bar-Eli, 1993; Hutzler & Sherrill, 1999). On a group level, sport participation may offer a unique opportunity to meet with others, to make friends and to develop a sense of belonging to a group. This has been found for other groups. Blinde, Taub and Han (1994) reported that women athletes expressed strong, positive comments on how sport created bonding between women and developed a high group identity and a striving towards common goals. Scraton, Fasting, Pfister and Bunuel (1998) reported similar findings.

It remains to be seen if individuals with a disability in sport differ from groups with disabilities outside of sport as to empowerment. However, studies have found larger differences between individuals with a disability within and outside of sport on other psychological measures (self esteem etc.), than between athletes with and without a disability (Horvath, Henschen and French, 1994).

In the following, some of the mediators of empowerment as described in the empowerment framework will be examined.

- **Identity**

Typical responses in the qualitative study to a question about whether the participants thought participation in sport could influence their identity, were:

"Absolutely! That I believe. Because you get the focus away from your weaknesses, you get the focus changed toward what you can do and that you can develop what is good... and one gains a little more confidence in oneself. That can increase your self-esteem; give you a better self image" (female, CP, interview 3)
"It gave me an activity that was more equal to what the other boys had - they could play football, I could not. The alternatives for disabled were mostly handicraft type activities. But sport had another status as a leisure time activity...I believe that has been important - that I too could say I was going to training, see? Sport, training, table tennis. It was as good as football, right? Sport. / And that I could come home from a meet with a prize... Well... I think it has been important - it gives respect and that does something for your self-esteem. You get a little more normal, a little more ordinary, you are engaged in something that is an ordinary activity." (male, polio, interview 1).

From the qualitative data it seemed that sport may have some potential for developing an alternative identity as well as helping to accept the disability identity. The following factors were identified as contributions of sport participation to a positive identity formation:

1) To develop an identity as an athlete.
2) To assume an accepted role, be respected.
3) To do something "normal" and feel even with "the normal" population.
4) Shift of focus away from disability.
5) To develop what is functioning and thereby accepting the disability.
6) To strengthen the self-confidence by mastery, achievements and coping with challenges.
7) To learn focusing on goals and working to reach them.

When we measured aspects of identity in the sample from the sport clubs, there were no significant differences between the scores of members with and without a disability on the Athletic Identity Scale as shown in figure 3. However, not surprisingly, there was some variation with age and performance level. Those between 21 - 30 years scored higher than the others ($F=2.86$, df=3, p=.038). Those who rated their ability high (Pearsons $r=1.48$, df=2, p=.001) or defined themselves among the best athletes (Pearsons $r=29.15$, df=4, p=.000) had higher scores on the athletic identity scale than those who described their ability as medium or low.

On the ratings of what the participants thought of as the most important aspect of their identity, only 7% of those with a disability rated this as their most important identity. More than 18% of the members with a disability actually did not think of themselves in the role of a disabled person. This may reflect the relatively high proportion of individuals with a hearing impairment, who tend to see themselves more as a cultural minority than individuals with a disability. Altogether these data do, however, indicate that sport may assist in developing an alternative identity to the disability identity.

For empowerment on a group level, identification with others in the same situation is necessary. The respondents indicated on a 4-point scale how much they identified with / belonged to various subgroups in the sport club. Figure 4 shows the distribution of identification with the group of members with a disability.

Nearly 60% of the members with a disability reported to identify "much or very much" with the others with disability. However, there were some differences between those who took part in integrated, segregated and mixed settings. Those who were integrated identified significantly less with others with disabilities (Kruskal-Wallis, chi-sq. = 24.13, p=<.000). This may of course reflect degree of disability in relation to the sport, but may also indicate that integration may have
some negative influence on group empowerment. On the positive side of integration, nearly 30% of the able bodied athletes also identified with those with a disability.

**Motivational orientation and motivational climate**

For the individual goal orientations, there were no significant differences between the athletes with and without a disability, and there were no general gender differences on any of the measures. As shown in table 2 the able bodied athletes with a disability scored significantly higher on perceived performance climate (t = -2.427, df = 242, p = .035)

There were also no differences related to participating in integrated, disability group or both settings. There were, however, significant differences within the group; the higher they rated their ability in sports, the higher they scored on perceived performance climate (F = 4.13, p = .018). Among the disability groups, those with a hearing impairment scored significantly higher on performance climate than the other groups (F = 3.49, p = .009). As mentioned, there was a relatively high proportion of individuals with a hearing impairment in this sample. It is well known that the process of integration of disability sport has created a lot of frustration within deaf sport in particular, and this may have influenced these results.

In order to establish the associations between the perceptions of the motivational climate and empowerment, a canonical correlation analysis was performed in a model with perception of performance and mastery climates as criterion variables, and general empowerment, sports empowerment, self esteem, external control, task- and ego orientation as well as competition level, sex and disability as predictor variables. Two functions emerged, one with performance climate, and one with mastery climate (see table 3).

The first function (performance climate), was associated with ego orientation (r = .690) and external control (r = .714). The loadings from task orientation, general empowerment, sport empowerment, self esteem, ability, sex and disability were not significant (r < .300). Function 2 (mastery climate), demonstrated positive associations with task orientation (r = .749), general empowerment (r = .375), sport empowerment (r = .490), self-esteem (r = .313) and competitive level (r = .329) but negative loadings on sex (r = -.447), which may mean that the females favour the mastery climate (as the score is 1 for women and 2 for men). It may also be an anomaly since this is a dichotomous variable. The loading for disability was not significant (r = -.178) for any of the functions, meaning that disability is not particularly associated with either performance or mastery climate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Function 1 Performance climate</th>
<th>Function 2 Mastery climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion variables:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance climate</td>
<td>0.988*</td>
<td>-0.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery climate</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.997*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictor variables:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task mean</td>
<td>-0.76</td>
<td>0.749*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego mean</td>
<td>0.690*</td>
<td>0.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General empowerment</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>0.375*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport empowerment</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
<td>0.490*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emp. self-esteem</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.313*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External control</td>
<td>0.714*</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td>0.329*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.156</td>
<td>-0.447*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>-0.255</td>
<td>0.178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = significant loadings > 0.300

**Table 3:** Canonical correlations with motivational climate.

The canonical correlations seem to underline that a mastery climate was positively associated with task orientation and all types of empowerment. The performance climate was associated with ego orientation and external control (also apparent in a regression, where performance climate explained 13% of the variance in external control (R² = .131, F = 37.3, p < .001). A mastery climate thus seemed to be more strongly associated with empowerment in general. Therefore, it seems reasonable to
conclude that in order to promote empowerment it is important to foster a mastery climate.

We found that all our respondents were ambiguous toward integration, seeing both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, they reported positive experiences from integrated settings:

"They (the able bodied) have looked upon you as an athlete, that's all. I cannot remember that they have focused on chairs or crutches or such things. It is sort of only-- they have only seen the athlete in it..... We never got the feeling that they pat your head and tell you how good you are, sort of. I really don't think so" (female, CP, interview 3).

The two individuals who have been involved in top-level sport said that integration improved their sport performance:

"It has been incredibly positive - it fired me to train so to speak with normals, with those who were ahead of me as to "equipment". It gave me a lot and it also gave them a lot, they said, in relation to come to see something- well as to mystification. If we are to change attitudes, we have to be visible, be among the others" (male, amputee, interview 4).

"The reason why I have come as far as I have, I think is that I have been integrated in the ordinary training. Should I have been in an institution for the blind, I would have been lost. ..When I was 6-7 years I already had a lot of good companions, and if I had gone away to an institution for several years, lost my companions at home, only had friends in an institution and then come home, I would have felt completely lost without a social network around me. And I think I would have felt helpless then, worth as little as possible. Not worth anything.." (Male visually impaired, interview 5).

On the other hand, there are also drawbacks with integration and positive aspects of segregation, according to this group:

"There is something positive about segregation too, right? Birds of a feather... and yes, you learn! There is something there that worries me, and especially for children and youth" (male, blind, interview 2).

"I have all the time been open for the idea that Paralympics and the Olympics should go together, but I am not so sure anymore that it can be done and that it would be successful for disabled athletes because they will be overshadowed by the able bodied athletes, and then I think it is better that they have separate events" (male, visually impaired, interview 5).

There is an ambiguity in the wish for normalisation and the benefits of being in a special group that can be explained in terms of different motives for sport participation. Research has demonstrated that when people find themselves in situations that are threatening to their self esteem, they may enhance their affects by comparing with others with similar background attributes, or with some who are worse off than themselves (downward comparisons) (Gibbons & Gerrard, 1989). When a person is motivated for improvements of ability or performance level, they often compare with someone who is better at the ability (upward social comparison). The quotations from the top level athletes above are examples of this, and upward social comparison may explain why the two top-level athletes found integrated training with able-bodied athletes so positive. With less emphasis on improvement of performance, the need to compare with able bodied may not be present and even counterproductive to empowerment. Loss of visibility for disability sport was also mentioned as a concern by one of the top-level athletes.

Those with the larger and more visible handicaps that are congenital or acquired in childhood, reported to have profited from social comparison with other individuals with disabilities in sport. They referred to disability sport groups as something they had gained strength and motivation from, that it had positively influenced their own identity and self-perception, and helped them come to terms with their disability. This difference may also reflect the severity of the disability, how different one feels and how much loss of self-esteem the disability represents. Everybody in this sample
expressed concern for what integration will mean for those with more severe disabilities:

"The" lighter disabilities enter top level sport - you see them in Paralympics etc. But then there are those who are more dependent of others - can only play Boccia or use training for rehabilitation purposes... Who are going to bother to organise that? Who are going to take care of those with a severe CP without language?" (Male, blind, interview 2)

In the sport federations that have assumed the responsibility for integration, there is a tendency to take the responsibility for those with the least need for assistance and leave the others to the federation for disability sport (Sørensen, Kahrs and Aamodt, 2003). All our informants expressed concern for what the result of a totally integrated sport organisation would mean for those who demand more assistance and resources.

The data from the sport clubs did not demonstrate differences in empowerment between those who trained in integrated, segregated or both settings on any of the measures included in this study, apart from group identification. This probably reflects that at this stage of the integration process in our country, the individual can to a great extent choose the kind of setting he or she prefers because the disability sport organisation still exists. However, given the huge variation of functional capacity among the population with a disability, a dilemma between the integration ideology and what may serve the needs of some individuals with a disability may surface at a later stage of the process if everybody is to be included in the regular clubs. It is already apparent that recruitment to disability sport is suffering, but it is difficult to know whether this is a general trend in all organised sport, or if the integration process plays a role (Sørensen, Kahrs and Aamodt, 2003).

**Conclusions**

To try to sum up some of the elements that have been examined within the empowerment framework, we performed regression analyses and set up a path diagram. (The numbers shown are for those with a disability only, but the pattern was very similar for all).

Athletic identity and empowerment self-esteem are related to both general empowerment and sports empowerment. These variables together with a low score on performance climate explained 55% of the variance in sports empowerment, which again is strongly related to general empowerment, as shown in figure 5.

![Path diagram of the empowerment process.](image-url)
It seems that sport has the potential to be an arena for empowerment for individuals with a disability by contributing to a positive identity formation, increasing self esteem through skill development and being a learning arena for goal directed work. This seems to be on the condition that mastery climates are promoted and ego-climates downplayed and disability sport athletes are given choice as to level of integration according to own needs and motivations.

When discussing integration of minority groups in a society, it is important to remember that most minority populations, whether ethnic, religious and cultural groups, sexual orientation or disability are heterogeneous in most respects. In an empowerment perspective, it is important to provide possibilities for he individual to develop skills, abilities and opportunities to make their own decisions, gain control over their lives and take action to improve their life situation on their own terms. This will also apply to a choice to be engaged in sport in an integrated or segregated setting, or both.

In our society, and in sport, an equality ideology is promoted, which in itself is positive. Our data did not demonstrate differences in empowerment between those who trained in integrated, segregated or both settings in 1998, but given the large variation of functional capacity among the population with a disability, a dilemma between the integration ideology and what may serve the needs of some individuals with a disability may surface at a later stage of the process. From an empowerment perspective the right to make your own decisions should be more important than political ideals. In sport, the solution suggested by informants in the qualitative study may be an answer:

"The question is whether the freedom of choice should be greater" (male, polio, interview 2)

"If I could wish something it should not be either or, but both possibilities. It may well be that all sport... can be a part of a general organisation as it is suggested. But as there are so many types of disability and so many levels or degrees of disability......and if you do not function that well, maybe there has to be a small sports club that simply is only for people with disabilities" (female, CP, interview 3)

Acknowledgement

Dr. Anne Marte Pensgaard is acknowledged for substantial contributions to this work; especially in the development of the model and collecting of the data.

References


Integration beim Sport und Förderung von Athleten mit einer Behinderung

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Abstract


Methoden

Eine qualitative und eine quantitative Untersuchung:


Ergebnisse und auswertung

Die Daten der qualitativen Untersuchung zeigen sehr deutlich, dass Sport zur Förderung der Athleten in mehrerelei Hinsicht beigetragen hat, z.B. durch die Verlagerung des Schwerpunktes von der Behinderung auf die Bereiche, die funktionieren, und die Tatsache, dass es sich um einen Lernbereich für Fähigkeiten handelt, die auch im allgemeinen Leben von Nutzen sind. Die Probanden nannten sowohl positive wie auch negative Aspekte der Integration, aber alle brachten ihr Interesse daran zum Ausdruck, was Integration für diejenigen bedeutet, die viel Unterstützung und zusätzliche Hilfsmittel benötigen. In der quantitativen Untersuchung hat sich zwar herausgestellt, dass eine Behinderung allgemeine Förderung quasi herausfordert, aber dass Sport als Podium für die Förderung von Menschen mit einer Behinderung nur in der Gruppe funktioniert.

Bei allen Förderungsmaßnahmen gab es keine Unterschiede, was Geschlecht oder Art der Behinderung angeht. Die Daten zeigen, dass Sport sowohl bei der Entwicklung einer Alternatividentität zur behinderten Identität wie auch bei der Akzeptanz der Behinderung als integrierter Teil der Identität helfen kann. Die Daten zeigen auch, dass Sport ein Podium für Gruppenförderung sein kann. Fast 60% der Mitglieder mit einer Behinderung berichteten, dass sie sich "stark oder sehr stark" mit anderen Individuen mit einer Behinderung identifizierten. Allerdings identifizierten sich die Individuen, die in einer integrierten Umgebung trainierten, bedeutend weniger mit anderen Behinderten, was beweist, dass Integration gewisse negative Auswirkungen auf die Gruppenförderung haben kann. Andererseits hatte die Integration dahingehend einen positiven Effekt, dass beinahe 30% der nichtbehinderten Athleten sich stark oder sehr stark mit den behinderten Athleten identifizierten.

In Bezug auf individuelle Zielorientierung und Geschlecht gab es keine bedeutenden Unterschiede zwischen behinderten und nichtbehinderten Athleten. Die Athleten mit einer Behinderung schnitten bedeutend besser bei der Wahrnehmung des Leistungsklimas ab. Bei den Behindertengruppen schnitten die Hörgeschädigten in Bezug auf das Leistungsklima bedeutend besser ab als die anderen Gruppen. Die Integration des Behindertensports hat besonders bei tauben Sportlern für große Frustrationen gesorgt, was sich auf die Ergebnisse ausgewirkt haben mag.

Insgesamt scheint es so, dass Sport das Potential besitzt, ein Podium für die Förderung von Individuen mit einer Behinderung zu sein, da er zur Bildung einer positiven Identität und einer Gruppenidentität beiträgt, das Selbstwertgefühl durch Leistung steigert und ein Lernbereich für zielorientierte Arbeit ist. Das kann jedoch nur funktionieren, wenn das Mastery-Klima gefördert wird, das Egoklima reduziert wird und Behindertensportler die Möglichkeit erhalten, den Grad der Integration ihren eigenen Bedürfnissen und ihrer Motivation entsprechend anzupassen.
Intégration dans le sport et renforcement de l'autonomie des athlètes frappés d'une incapacité

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Abstract

Cet article vise à examiner certains aspects du sport en tant que contexte de renforcement de l'autonomie pour ceux qui le pratiquent, en particulier les athlètes frappés d'une incapacité. Aux fins de cette étude, le renforcement de l'autonomie est défini comme suit: "le processus par lequel les individus développent leurs compétences et leurs capacités en vue de contrôler leur vie et de faire le nécessaire pour améliorer leur condition d'existence" (Gutierrez, 1990). Le sport pour handicapés englobe tous les types de sport pratiqués par les individus handicapés en tant que sport organisé, que ce soit dans une structure intégrée ou propre aux handicapés. Il existe une tendance, dans le monde occidental, à promouvoir l'intégration des individus frappés d'incapacité, notamment dans le sport. La confédération sportive norvégienne a décidé, en 1996, d'intégrer les organisations sportives pour handicapés dans les fédérations sportives ordinaires. Ce processus n'en est qu'à ses débuts. En général, l'intégration consiste en un processus de regroupement de divers éléments en un seul tout. Dans ce contexte particulier, je me réfère à l'objectif de la confédération sportive norvégienne, c'est-à-dire la prise en charge du sport pour personnes handicapées par les fédérations sportives ordinaires, plutôt que par des organisations distinctes.

Hutzler (1990) a décrit un modèle de renforcement de l'autonomie basé sur le sport qui associe cette autonomie à des concepts d'autoefficacité et de compétence perçue. L'objectif de son modèle est le suivant : l'individu doit réussir, à travers le sport, à contrôler ses ressources personnelles et environnementales afin d'acquérir des compétences dont il est habituellement privé en raison de son handicap. Le renforcement de l'autonomie s'opère toutefois au niveau de l'individu, du groupe, de l'organisation et de la société (Perkins, 1995). Par conséquent, nous avons élargi le modèle de renforcement de l'autonomie basé sur le sport pour inclure les niveaux de l'individu, du groupe et de la société (Pensgaard & Sørensen, 2002); nous avons également étudié comment l'identité, la capacité, l'orientation vers l'objectif et le climat motivationnel sont liés au renforcement de l'autonomie.

Méthodes

Une étude qualitative et une étude quantitative:

Pour la partie qualitative de cette recherche, un panel d'experts composé de cinq athlètes
(quatre hommes et une femme) bénéficiant d'une expérience considérable à la fois dans le sport de haut niveau, les autres sports de compétition et le sport de loisir, a été interrogé sur son vécu sportif et sur ses opinions relatives au renforcement de l'autonomie et à l'intégration par le sport. Pour la partie quantitative, nous avons étudié un échantillon de 248 athlètes issus de clubs sportifs norvégiens jouissant d'une expérience avec des individus atteints d'une incapacité. Nous avons dénombré, parmi eux, 151 personnes handicapées et 96 sans handicap (1 personne sans information). Sur la base d'un questionnaire diffusé dans les clubs de sport et retourné par la poste, nous avons évalué le renforcement de l'autonomie en général, le contrôle externe et le renforcement de l'autonomie, l'estime de soi, l'orientation vers un but d'implication dans la tâche et de l'ego (une variable motivationnelle), la perception d'un climat de performance ou de maîtrise motivationnelle au sein de l'organisation, les différents aspects de l'identité ainsi que la documentation sur la participation sportive et l'incapacité.

Résultats et discussion

Les données de l'étude qualitative ont très clairement indiqué que le sport avait contribué, de diverses manières, à renforcer l'autonomie des athlètes, par exemple en mettant l'accent non plus sur l'incapacité mais sur ce qui fonctionne, ainsi qu'en étant un cadre d'apprentissage de compétences utiles dans la vie en général. Les personnes interrogées ont signalé à la fois les aspects positifs et négatifs de l'intégration, mais toutes ont manifesté une préoccupation quant au sens de l'intégration pour ceux qui nécessitent énormément d'assistance et des ressources supplémentaires. L'étude quantitative a permis de conclure que l'incapacité semblait remettre en cause le renforcement de l'autonomie en général, mais que le sport semblait jouer un rôle habitant pour le groupe des personnes atteintes d'incapacité.

Les différentes mesures de renforcement de l'autonomie n'ont révélé aucune différence liée au sexe ou au type d'incapacité. Les données ont indiqué que le sport peut aider à développer une identité alternative à l'identité de l'incapacité, et permettre d'accepter cette dernière comme partie intégrante de l'identité. Les données collectées ont également signalé que le sport peut être un cadre de renforcement de l'autonomie. Près de 60 % des membres présentant une incapacité ont fait part d'une identification " importante ou très importante " avec les autres personnes frappées d'incapacité. Toutefois, celles qui se sont entraînées dans des structures intégrées, se sont identifiées significativement moins que les autres personnes présentant un handicap, ce qui démontre que l'intégration peut avoir des conséquences négatives pour le renforcement de l'autonomie du groupe. D'autre part, un aspect positif de l'intégration a été démontré par le fait que près de 30 % des athlètes valides se sont identifiés de manière importante ou très importante avec les personnes atteintes d'une incapacité.

Aucune différence significative n'a été observée entre les athlètes avec incapacité et sans incapacité en ce qui concerne les orientations des objectifs individuels ; de même, aucune différence n'a été constatée entre les sexes. Les athlètes ont obtenu des résultats significativement plus élevés pour le climat de performance perçu. Parmi les groupes souffrant d'une incapacité, les personnes présentant une déficience auditive ont obtenu un score significativement plus élevé pour le climat de performance que celles des autres groupes. Le processus d'intégration du sport pour handicapés a engendré énormément de frustration, notamment chez les sportifs malentendants, et cela peut avoir influé sur les résultats.

Une analyse de corrélation canonique avec la perception des climats de performance et de maîtrise comme variables de critère, et le renforcement de l'autonomie générale, le renforcement de l'autonomie sportive, l'estime de soi, le contrôle externe, l'orientation vers un but d'implication dans la tâche et de l'ego ainsi que le niveau de compétition, le sexe et l'incapacité comme variables de prédiction, a révélé que le climat de maîtrise a été positivement associé à l'orientation vers un but d'implication dans la tâche ainsi que le sexe et l'incapacité comme variables de prédiction, a révélé que le climat de maîtrise a été positivement associé à l'orientation vers un but d'implication dans la tâche et à tous les types de renforcement de l'autonomie. Le climat de performance a été associé à l'orientation vers un but d'implication de l'ego et au contrôle externe. Il semble raisonnable de conclure que, pour...
favoriser le renforcement de l'autonomie, il est important d'encourager un climat de maîtrise.

Il semble, somme toute, que le sport a le potentiel nécessaire pour renforcer l'autonomie des individus frappés d'incapacité en contribuant à la formation d'une identité positive et d'une identité de groupe - ce qui augmente l'estime de soi grâce aux réalisations - et en constituant un cadre d'apprentissage pour le travail guidé par les buts. Néanmoins, ce travail est uniquement possible si l'on favorise les climats de maîtrise, si l'on minimise les climats d'ego et, enfin, si les athlètes frappés d'incapacité peuvent accéder à un niveau d'intégration en rapport avec leurs besoins et leurs motivations.
Integration in sport and empowerment of athletes with a disability

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine some aspects of sport as an empowering context for those who participate, with a special emphasis on athletes with a disability. Empowerment is defined here as: "the process by which individuals develop skills and abilities to gain control over their lives and to take action to improve their life situation" (Gutierrez, 1990). Disability sport refers to all types of sport where individuals with a disability participate in organised sport, whether in an integrated or disability-specific setting. There is a trend in the Western world to promote the integration of individuals with disabilities, including in sport. The Norwegian Sports Confederation made a decision in 1996 to integrate the organisations for disability sport into the ordinary sports federations. This process is in its early stages. In general, integration refers to the process of making parts into a whole. In this particular context, I am referring to the aim of the Norwegian Sports Confederation, which is that the ordinary sports federations take responsibility for sport for individuals with a disability, rather than having separate organisations for disability sport.

Hutzler (1990) described a model of sports-based empowerment that linked empowerment to concepts such as self-efficacy and perceived competence. The goal, according to his model, is that through the sporting experience the individual should acquire control over personal and environmental resources in order to provide competencies usually denied as a result of the disability. Empowerment operates, however, at individual, group, organisational and societal levels (Perkins, 1995). Therefore, we extended the model of sports-based empowerment to include individual, group and societal levels (Pensgaard & Sørensen, 2002) and explored how identity, ability, goal orientation and motivational climate were related to empowerment.

Methods

One qualitative and one quantitative study:

For the qualitative part of this research, an expert panel consisting of five athletes (four men and one woman, all white) with considerable experience of top-level sport, other competitive sport and recreational exercise was interviewed about their sport experiences and opinions on empowerment and integration through sport. For the quantitative part, we investigated a sample of 248 athletes in Norwegian sports clubs that had experience with individuals with a disability. Among them, 151 individuals had a disability and 96 were able-bodied (1 missing value). In a
questionnaire distributed through the sport clubs and returned by mail, we measured general empowerment, external control and empowerment self-esteem, task and ego goal orientation (a motivational variable), perception of a performance or mastery motivational climate within the organisation, various aspects of identity and background information on sports participation and disability.

Results and discussion

The data from the qualitative study indicated very clearly that sport had contributed to the athletes’ empowerment in various ways, e.g. by shifting focus away from the disability towards what is functioning, as well as being a learning arena for skills useful in general life. The respondents reported both positive and negative aspects of integration, but all of them expressed concern for what integration would mean for those who need a lot of assistance and extra resources. In the quantitative study, we found that disability seemed to challenge general empowerment, but that sport seemed to function as an empowering arena for people with a disability as a group.

There was no difference in any of the empowerment measures according to gender or type of disability. The data indicated that sport may assist in developing an alternative identity to the disability identity, as well as encouraging acceptance of the disability as an integrated part of the identity. Data also indicated that sport may be an arena for group empowerment. Nearly 60% of the members with a disability reported that they identified "closely or very closely" with others with a disability. However, those who trained in integrated settings identified significantly less closely with others with disabilities, demonstrating that integration may have some negative consequences for group empowerment. On the other hand, a positive aspect of integration was demonstrated by the fact that nearly 30% of the able-bodied athletes identified closely or very closely with those with a disability.

There were no significant differences between the athletes with and without a disability on individual goal orientations, nor were there any gender differences. The athletes with a disability scored significantly higher on perceived performance climate. Among the disability groups, those with a hearing impairment scored significantly higher on performance climate than the other groups. The process of integration of disability sport has created much frustration in deaf sport in particular and this may have influenced these results.

A canonical correlation analysis with perception of performance and mastery climates as criterion variables, and general empowerment, sports empowerment, self-esteem, external control, task and ego orientation, as well as competition level, sex and disability as predictor variables, demonstrated that a mastery climate was positively associated with task orientation and all types of empowerment. The performance climate was associated with ego orientation and external control. It seems reasonable to conclude that, in order to promote empowerment, it is important to foster a mastery climate.

All in all, it seems that sport has the potential to be an arena for empowerment for individuals with a disability by contributing to positive identity formation and group identity, increasing self-esteem through achievements, and providing a learning arena for goal-directed work. However, this will work only if mastery climates are promoted and ego climates are downplayed and disability sport athletes are given choice of level of integration according to their own needs and motivations.