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This paper critically explores the relationship between the gendered nature of sport in Colombia and girls and young women's social in/exclusion in football (soccer) through the lived experiences of female participants involved in a local Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) organization. Building on six months of ethnographic fieldwork and Lave and Wenger's theory of Community of Practice (CoP), I explore the complex and connected gendered social elements that constrain girls and young women's participation. Analyzing these processes and mechanisms through a decolonial lens, I reveal the existence of colonial residues that perpetuate and reinforce females positioning as peripheral actors in sport. The findings demonstrate how female participants are required to negotiate spaces with contradictory gendered meanings and confirm that social transformation within masculine structures is difficult to achieve. This research encourages SDP researchers to further engage with decolonial theory.

Keywords: social inclusion; Sport for Development and Peace; Colombia; Sport, Gender and Development; decolonial theory; Community of Practice

Introduction

Due to the social construction of sport that historically prioritized (white, able-bodied) men and side-lined women, sport is identified as a space or process that reinforces gender ideology (Anderson 2008, 2009; Hargreaves 2002; Messner and Bozada-Deas, 2009); yet, Kay (2003, 97) argues because of the gendered nature of sport, it is a valuable site for challenging gender ideology, particularly among 'the most disempowered women'. This is delicate work, however, and the idea of challenging the hegemony by including traditionally excluded peoples is debated by Puwar (2004, 117) who argues that bodies that are atypical to a particular space – such as girls on a football (soccer) field in Colombia – are accepted in that space as long as they 'mimic the norm whilst the norm itself is not problematised'. Football in Colombia is socially reserved as a masculine pursuit, thus, generally speaking, Colombian girls are not encouraged to play due to gender norms that idealize girls and women as 'delicate' and reserve football as an activity for boys (Velez 2009; Author 2017). This paper will critically explore the relationship between the 'norm' – that is the gendered nature of sport in Colombia – and young women's social in/exclusion in sport through the lived experiences of female participants involved in a local Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) organization. Specifically, the 'relative status' of girls and young women in two marginalized communities will be explored through the complex and connected gendered social elements that relationally constrain their social inclusion in SDP – derogatory language, gendered socialization, and social stigma.

These three social elements will be analyzed in conjunction with Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of community of practice. A community of practice (CoP) is 'an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement of an endeavor'

such as participation in or volunteer for a SDP organization; through the mutual endeavor, they demonstrate, 'ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992, 464). Members of a community of practice may participate with the SDP organization to varying degrees, such as a participant who attends the organization a few days a week, a parent who interacts once a month, or a community member who only attends health-focused events. SDP participants and community members construct and negotiate their identities in a particular way in order to belong in the CoP (Lave and Wenger 1991).[i]

Literature on social inclusion includes four dimensions: spatial, relational, functional and power. This paper will focus on the second dimension, relational, conceptualized as an individual's sense of belonging. Spaaij, Magee, and Jeanes (2014, 101) argue 'exclusionary mechanisms at all levels of sport are often implicit, subtle and complex, and therefore difficult to identify, deconstruct and transform.' For the interlocutors, the processes and mechanisms surrounding derogatory language, gendered socialization, and social stigma, may seem and feel as though they are normal; however, they are critical processes that reproduce a cultural hegemony that continues to shape and constrain girls and young women's participation in SDP in Colombia. It is to the SDP movement that I now turn.

The SDP movement, buttressed by the United Nations, led policymakers to latch on to the idea that the social inclusion of girls and young women in SDP programming would result in improved livelihoods for girls and gender equality (Peace and Sport 2016; UN 2016).[ii] Assumptions of positive transformations emerged after several changes were identified to have taken place, once girls were included in sport: gendered public spaces began to be redefined to include female athletes (Brady, 2005); female role models outside of the home were created (Meier 2016; Meier and Saavedra 2009);

and, female social networks were expanded (Brady et. al 2007). Recent research reveals that girls and young women's social inclusion in SDP is complex as local context (Author 2016; Hayhurst et al. 2014), gender/sex[iii] roles and gendered responsibilities (Collison et al. 2017; Zipp 2016), and gendered stereotypes concerning both athletes' bodies and sexuality (Jeanes 2011; Zipp 2016) may limit girls' participation or constrain them from accessing sport altogether.

Coalter (2015, 19) criticizes SDP social inclusion research for 'wrongly generalizing micro level (programme) effects to the macro (social)'. He suggests that 'various aspects of social inclusion may *precede* participation' as 'sport participation is closely related to structural issues underpinning social inclusion' (Coalter 2015, 21). In particular, he draws on the social inclusion of girls and women, noting 'the level of female sports participation is clearly strongly correlated with the relative status of women in society …one which is closely related to levels on inequality' (Coalter 2015, 21).

To explore the structural issues that may 'precede' girls and young womens' participation in SDP in Colombia and female subjectivity, I will employ a decolonial feminist approach in theoretical analysis.[iv] Through the exploration of normative expressions and local histories, this paper will answer the following questions: how do practices of gender and sexuality shape the social in/exclusion of girls and young women in SDP in Colombia? How is the reproduction of gendered cultural hegemony that precedes their participation sustained through SDP? It is to decolonial theory I now turn.

Decolonial theory

Decolonial thought emerged from the Latin American colonial and intellectual experience and questions the colonial legacies from the Spanish and Portuguese conquests in the fifteenth century that 'shape development, globalization, and modern subjectivity' (Asher 2013, 839).[v] A critical concept underpinning decolonial thought (and separating it from post-colonial thought) is the relationship between modernity and coloniality.[vi]

Modernity, or 'the visible side to coloniality' (Giraldo 2016a, 54), became the hegemonic status quo world system that included the notion of the civilized human versus the uncivilized (or subhuman) dichotomy defined by those in power (Grosfoguel 2014). Humans outside the metropole (and racialized people within) were organized de facto in the latter category and thus automatically assumed to be in need of being saved, governed, and emancipated by the powerful civilized (Grosfoguel 2014). In our current world system, this translates to 'sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the racial/ethnic hierarchy (of the European/non-European divide) transversally reconfigures all of the other global power structures' (Grosfoguel 2009, 20). The term used to capture the continuities of these processes and structures of domination is coloniality.

Coloniality refers to 'the invisible threads of power that emerge in colonial situations but extend well beyond a strictly colonial setting and period' (Giraldo 2016a, 161). The colonial residues of import that create diverse oppressions and multiple exclusions for people in this research include a strict Christian-based gender order, where women are relegated to subordinate positions; an entrenched class system based on diversity of labor, but explicitly linked to racial hierarchies that privilege

white/European people over non-white peoples; the exclusion of non-gender binary peoples in society enabling heteronormativity; and, powerful violent/military systems organized by men that maintain and reproduce these structures (Grosfoguel, 2009; Giraldo, 2016a).

Introducing a feminist perspective to the decolonial debate, Lugones coined the term coloniality of gender and defined decolonial feminism as 'the possibility of overcoming coloniality of gender' (Lugones 2010, 747). Lugones (2007, 2010) argues a normalized racial logic renders the colonial/raced woman invisible and moreover, the bifurcated concepts of masculinity and femininity are also ramifications of European colonial force (Bhambra 2014). Evidence of a 'genderless' society pre-colonialism as claimed by Lugones (2007) is not substantiated, but Giraldo (2016b, 63) drawing from Segato (2011) argues there is ample ethnographic evidence demonstrating the existence of a social hierarchy determined by 'masculinity' and 'femininity' constructed as 'flexible', 'anti-essentialist', with 'gradual and fluid conceptualisations', rather than man/woman binary opposition.

Criticizing Lugones for methodological flaws and addressing the reality that decolonial feminism largely operates outside academia where it is oriented towards 'questions of praxis, social commitment, and political activism', Giraldo (2016b, 55-56) suggests decolonial feminist theory focus on the historical present and female subjectivity. She writes:

> Understanding 'gender' as a socio-cultural force that brings sexed subjects into being and tying it to 'coloniality' makes these critiques as enunciated from Latin American decolonial approaches – as well as from certain postcolonial positions (Narayan 1997; Razack 2005; Mahmood 2008; Shehabuddin 2011) – visible. (Giraldo 2016b, 64)

The aim of decolonizing gender is to end the static Western gender binary that traps

non-Western women in a double bind of being represented as either empowered in the Western sense (e.g., 'modern, neoliberal, capitalist') or 'the perpetual victim' needing to be rescued (Giraldo 2016b, 65). Bouteldja (2017, n.p.) puts this in another way, writing: 'decolonial feminism must aim to destroy the imitation of the imitation and this will necessarily be delicate work.' In response, through everyday interactions, we must explore how masculinity and femininity are being performed and reproduced in this 'modern' era, how coloniality plays into theses reproductions, and the extent these reproductions shape society. In order to demonstrate how the 'invisible threads' continue to shape Colombian social systems, and to work towards 'destroying' the reproduction of a cultural hegemony that reproduces the normalization of girls being relegated to the periphery or altogether excluded in sport, I will apply a decolonial feminist lens.

Decolonial feminism challenges the geopolitical status quo of knowledge, allows us to see where coloniality is being reproduced and encourages the emergence of alternative possibilities. It is operationalized in two ways: first, in practical terms as an 'epistemological displacement of postcoloniality as it has been established in mainstream academia' which is done by drawing from Latino/a thinkers when possible (Giraldo 2016a, 160); second, I provide examples of female participants' lived realities which demonstrate how the coloniality of gender is embodied, embedded and reproduced within micro and meso social relations, resulting in illuminating the normative social exclusion of female participants in sport in Colombia where their non- or minor-participation is embedded as 'common sense'. The application of decolonial feminism will assist with analyzing individual experiences within the geopolitical context with the intention of contributing to broader agendas about equity and inclusion.

Methods

In 2015, I conducted six months of ethnographic research in neighbourhoods located on the outskirts of two cities in Colombia, which will be called Chévere and Bacano (three months per location). To protect the identity of the organization and interlocutors, pseudonyms will be used and identifying information withheld.

Research methods used explicitly for this paper included in-depth interviews with community members (N=60) and participant observation. A purposive sampling strategy was implemented. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Drawing from the life-history method, respondents were asked to answer questions and share stories about their upbringing, family relations, association with sport and opinion on young women's participation in sport. Participant observation included travelling to the field location four days a week to play, coach and assist in the field offices. My level of active participation varied by staff requests and scheduled interviews. Participant observation allowed for constant reflection not only about my social positioning as a researcher but also about the interactions and relationships between participants, employees, and community members in various public and private spaces across time.

Initially, all data were systematically analyzed based on themes drawn from decolonial feminist theory, such as internalized oppression (e.g., consent to the performance of coloniality), language and its relationship to history, and the hegemonic narrative that accepts/tolerates/justifies subordination in relation to access to space and gender roles. In addition, themes were identified inductively during data collection and analysis including homophobic language and the entanglements of class, religion, and gender. Identifying the critical importance of situational context and enablers and constraints of social resources, interviews and observations were analyzed through

narrative analysis (Chase, 2005). Narrative analysis is employed in this paper with the aim to provide the reader with explanatory stories of the interplay of agency and structure within this specific context (Polkinghorne, 1995). This analysis allows for eliciting rich information from the interviews and observations and organizing it in a way that provides the reader with context and interconnections occurring within the community.

Experiencing local social pressures was critical to understanding participants' lived experiences, but working in these communities required flexibility and vulnerability. By conducting ethnographic fieldwork, I could be flexible in my daily routine, but also pay attention to local knowledge and processes. I could not pretend to be ignorant of Colombia's colonial past or its complex relations with the United States (my native country). Moreover, my middle-class neo-liberal academic experience influenced by Western feminism and my white skin are elements embedded in my habitus. Although I identify as cis-gendered and heterosexual, due to my outsider status and vocal acceptance of homosexuality, and because female athletes are assumed to be lesbians, upon recommendation from Colombians, I feminized myself according to local standards with pink nails and mascara.

Undoubtedly my privileged status as a white, Western academic impinged on this research as my interactions with community members were limited. Following the security protocol required by my research institution and the SDP organization, which will be labelled VIDA, I lived in wealthier (safer) neighbourhoods distanced from the research sites, could only access the communities during select hours (8am-4pm) four days a week, and had to be accompanied by local leaders while in public. The leaders' escorts bolstered the research in many ways, however. When with them, I momentarily became a legitimized, but superficial 'insider' with secure access to many areas of the

neighbourhood. Because of regular interaction with leaders, I developed a comfortable rapport whereby they would discuss everyday mundane situations in their lives. Although my connection with leaders did superficially legitimize my presence in local spaces, my connection to them – although unlikely – may have influenced interlocutors who were indirectly involved with VIDA. Participant observation coupled with regular interaction allowed me to question and compare what I observed to what I heard in relaxed conversation and interviews, which were often vivid contradictions laced with double standards and implicit sexism. Below, I will outline the local context where I conducted the research.

Research sites and VIDA

The two research sites are home to some of Colombia's most vulnerable citizens. In the neighbourhoods where this research was conducted, sexual and domestic violence and teen pregnancy are critical issues that contribute to the poverty cycle (Pallitto and O'Campo 2005). Moreover, residents live in insecure, overcrowded housing and regularly experience chronic stress, which leads to high levels of depression. The first research location, Chévere, houses almost half of the city's internally displaced persons. Many residents are demobilized members of illegal armed groups. Normalizing violence, paramilitary groups, guerrillas, and gangs organize the neighbourhood into contested territories, aggressively recruit young men into their circles, and demand citizens to follow their commands.

The second location, Bacano, has important similarities, such as rampant violence and endemic poverty. A local policy report, withheld for anonymity, reads that more than 53% of its residents subsist on less than two dollars a day and 52% report feeling insecure. A significant difference is Bacano's proximity to beaches, sweltering

heat, and colonial history: qualities that make the surrounding areas a major tourist attraction. Tourist demands coupled with extreme poverty has led to underage prostitution becoming a lucrative business.

The NGO that participated in this research, VIDA, manages sport-based community programs in these (and other) locations. VIDA staff are cognizant of the problems these citizens encounter (Author, 2017). Their presence in the community is on an insider/outsider spectrum. Participants and their families considered VIDA staff to be 'family,' and most interlocutors appreciated VIDA's efforts, but a few community members' responses were slightly colder including a man in Bacano who complained of VIDA's 'outsider methodology'.

At VIDA, children play together on a regular basis and learn values such as tolerance and respect. Through their programming, the organization aims to combat violence, discourage drug use and encourage social inclusion; a key component of their mission is enrolling and supporting children in school. All participants have access to after-school tutoring facilitated by youth leaders, and after one year of participation, young participants qualify to participate in a school support program that includes school supplies (e.g., notebooks, book bag) and academic scholarships. Also, staff lead monthly seminars for parents that relate to the topics the children are studying.

VIDA employs sport as a strategy to recruit participants, but also to encourage play in their everyday life. A variety of sports or games are offered at each location depending on what is popular and suggested by participants, but football is the dominant activity. VIDA does not encourage competition and teams are typically determined by body size and ability, rather than gender or age. Although the organization welcomes all children to participate, it does not cater to the social inclusion

of young women, and significantly fewer girls participate. In findings section below, through voices of participants, I will explore the complex and connected gendered social elements that allow for a hegemonic narrative that makes girls and young women's social exclusion in VIDA look and feel normal.

Findings

To unpack how people negotiate meanings in and among their CoP, I will briefly explain the gendered nature of the Spanish language (a site for gender negotiation) and how it underpins habitus, specifically machismo. Considering the connection between thought, language, communication and action, I will then explore gendered language in relation to gender-based restrictions learned and reproduced through childhood socialization, questioning how these restrictions – though difficult to measure – may constrain girls and young women's social inclusion in SDP and sport.

The weight of language and machismo

Puwar (2004, 108) identifies the connection between language and colonialism by arguing that 'language is one of a range of methods that have been utilised to induce rationality, civility and civilisation in foreign bodies…and is intimately connected to governmentality'. Drawing from feminist linguists, Messner and Bozada-Deas (2009, 58) argue, 'language is a powerful element of social life—it not only reflects social realities such as gender divisions of labor, it also helps to construct our notions of what is normal and what is an aberration'. Although teasing linguistic and cultural factors apart is extremely difficult, research suggests language may influence thinking, especially memory and categorization (Sera, Berge and del Castillo Pintado 1994) and

the human experience (i.e., space, time, causality and relationships) (Boroditsky 2011).

In interviews and casual conversations, gendered labels became a common topic when discussing girls' participation in sport. For this reason, I will explore and unpack the gendered nature of Colombian Spanish before exploring derogatory words associated with female athletes/participants.

The Spanish language metaphorically absorbs women. When masculine identifiers are applied to represent both men and women, the invisibility of girls and women becomes standard.[vii] The 'universal' masculine erases women from text; therefore, in public policy and history, women do not exist (Rodriguez 2001, 480). Interlocutor Adelaida argued female invisibility is not reserved to language alone but extends into social interaction:

> Here women are invisible, you listen to a radio program and men talk as if there were no women listening to the radio, it affects you! That is my analysis, but it is very easy to see. You listen to a program on the radio, they are talking about some subject and they never take into account that there are women listening, you read some article and many times it is directed only to men. (Previous professional athlete, Bogotá, Adelaida)

In basic and routine language, girls and women are rendered invisible and subordinate to men. As such, it is relevant to consider that from the onset of verbal communication, Colombian Spanish speakers are negotiating the world, their place in it and their actions through a gendered lens. This normalized practice both reinforces and reproduces the coloniality of gender, as masculine outranks feminine. Below I will explore gendered words that shape socialization in Chévere and Bacano, beginning with machismo.

Machismo, a bellwether term applied to Latin American social research, is a

term applied to signify sexism and male dominance and is linked to physical, symbolic, and structural violence (Gutmann and Viveros, 2005; Viveros Vigoya 2016). Early in each interview, I asked participants to describe a Colombian girl and boy in three words. Older adults mostly said girls and boys are the same – 'they are just children!' – but noted the ideal woman is 'delicate'. When probed further about gendered treatment and rules, some said girls need more protection, but most argued girls and boys are treated equally, and both are capable.

Chévere participant, Valentina, identified differences and quickly connected these differences to the gendered nature of sport. When asked to describe a girl and a boy, she said a girl is 'brave, daring, adventurous' she paused before using the word 'fighter', whereas a boy is 'machista, coward, but fine!' Upon request, she clarified the term machista:

> Machista is a person who… [pause for reflection] It is a man, more than that, it is someone who sees everything in men and everything is for men and women don't have the right and in the case of football, football is full of machismo. At the foundation, we try to play mixed [gender], and by doing so, everything is better. (Participant, Chévere, Valentina)

Like most female interlocutors, Valentina's candid response led to a discussion on Colombia's hegemonic masculinity, characterized by male chauvinism (Viveros Vigoya 2016). Viviana, a shopkeeper in Chévere, responded similarly, but substituted men for boys in her response: 'men are more machismo'. Below, I will explore the application of machismo within social processes.

Language ←→ labels

Sitting with her back against a fence at a field in Chévere, Lourdes, a previous

participant, said girls who play sports continue to be called marimacha, a label that is 'very macho and very rude' that translates to tomboy, lesbian or dyke. When asked how community members treat female participants, she responded confidently, 'some young people say tomboy or they shout lesbian because she plays football. Yes? But they do not know. I think that we don't have to pay attention to those words. My life is to play'. Gabriela, another female participant in Chévere, had a similar viewpoint to Lourdes. Sitting in the office, she spoke about the labels she hears, 'Marimachos. All my life, I think for time before that too. But here at [VIDA], I have not heard men say that, not with that word'. Referring to these labels and female participants, she continued, 'They are offensive to us, and obviously we do not feel comfortable'. Yuliza, another Chévere participant, started playing at a young age in the street. When she began playing, she was labelled marimacho, which she defined as 'a person who has the body of a woman but has the soul of a man'. As she finished her statement, she blurted out defensively: 'But not now, *now* [girls playing] is normal!' I asked how she perceives these words.[viii] At this moment, her positive sentiments about social change stopped, and she spoke in a stream of consciousness:

> Well, when the girls are called them, it makes them feel bad - playing football is normal for men and women - but over time this is diminishing, and that word is no longer heard. Well, they used to say them [derogatory words] to hurt women, for example, they say *marimacha*, and you're normal because you know that you're not a *marimacha,* so you start to argue. (Participant, Chévere, Yuliza)

Sandra Milena, a participant from Bacano, echoed Yuliza's sentiments: 'The girls who play, marimacha, machorras, *you look like a machito*!' She said, imitating those who mock her.[ix] From my interviews with female participants, it was clear that derogatory

labels that alluded to homosexuality were a constant issue in their lives. However, the young women noted that inside the VIDA CoP they do not hear derogatory labels.

In contrast, statements from young male participants living in Chévere did not align with female participants' stories. They uniformly stated they did not know the derogatory labels discussed by female participants. It would be foolish, however, to think these young men do not know these words. However, it is understandable that they would actively try not to be associated with these words while to some extent representing VIDA as 'good citizens' in an interview.

Unlike the male participants in Chévere, male participants in Bacano appeared more aware of gender-based language and processes. For example, Diego, a leader in Bacano, discussed the challenges female footballers encounter, saying: 'girls are excluded, they are verbally assaulted, many say *don't do it, it's for men, you think you're a man*?' And when asked about the term machorra, he said: 'It was heard more previously, but even now it is heard'. He noted that in his practice to combat derogatory labels he calls female participants by name or addresses them by professional names (intended as a compliment). He then listed off a few famous male athletes' names:

> There are people who throw expressions [around] that are not suitable for women, and if you do not like the girl you can say that she is 'machorra'… but in a situation when the person is talented, she is compared with Messi, with Ronaldinho, with Cristiano Ronaldo, with high-performance players who have demonstrated a good development at the football level. (Participant, Bacano, Diego)

Sandra Milena corroborated Diego's statements, emphasizing that once the competitive state team selected her (and therefore she left VIDA-Bacano), people stopped labelling her with insults and stopped questioning her sexuality.

Confusingly, despite complaining about labels and stigma, female participants denied the weight of offensive labels, discrediting that it may result in the exclusion of female participants at VIDA. For example, Gabriela argued:

> It is not something that hinders us from playing, besides that is our decision. If all the girls in this sector played then I do not think that we would have the same stigma. The families also persuade girls not to play. (Participant, Chévere, Gabriela)

Although many female participants denied that labels restrict girls from playing, the low participation numbers of girls and young women, 20% in Chévere and 10% in Bacano, respectively, led me to question the connection between gendered language, gendered socialization and girls and young women's social in/exclusion in sport. The next section unpacks the connection between these social elements.

Gendered language ←→ gendered socialization

Forero-Peña (2015) addresses how childhood gendered socialization in Colombia encourages boys to objectify and abuse women as a part of their masculine identity, an issue Viveros Vigoya (2016) also explores but with added complexity as she also unpacks social class and racial-ethnic positioning in relation to masculinities. Below I will provide two examples that demonstrate the normalized gendered processes of socialization occurring on and off the football field at VIDA.

While half-heartedly refereeing children (ages 8-10) playing a handball game at VIDA- Chévere, I sat on the sideline and took notes:

One boy has stubbed his finger. He took a break to recover. Another boy asked why aren't you playing? He responded he needed a break. The boy said *you're a girl*! This was said in a condescending way and could have been exchanged for *you're a loser*! I asked the boy to repeat to me what had been said. He did. I asked the injured boy what this meant to him, he got up and ran back on the field. (Field notes, Chévere, May)

I continued to write:

Two girls are sitting beside me. I asked why they stopped playing and they said because the boys won't pass to them. I then asked if they had brothers here. Both said yes. One has three, the other one. I asked why aren't more girls here. They said at the other concha [previous field] many girls played. They think maybe girls don't know the route to get here or don't want to walk up the hill. (Field notes, Chévere, May)

These notes reflect the everyday social processes that demonstrate a direct connection between language and action. The boy is hurt (i.e., weak), so he is then compared to girls who are assumed to be weaker and less capable. He finds this insulting, resents the label and despite being in pain, he returns onto the field in a sprint to prove that indeed he is not a 'girl'. At the same time, their peers are not valuing the girls as equals on the field, and they are casually omitted from participation. The young girls assume this interaction to be normal, shrug off their disappointment, and continue to play segregated from the boys. Incidents of this nature are not isolated to VIDA, but research suggests they are commonplace in sport (Anderson 2008, 2009; Messner and Bozada-Deas, 2009). They demonstrate how micro-aggressions connect language to action and thus, normative social exclusion of girls and young women in sport.

Another example took place when VIDA's staff attended a weeklong conference, and in their absence, I managed the Chévere office. One rainy morning youth leaders Felipe and Valentina organized 18 children in a football scrimmage. When I interviewed Felipe weeks before, he had refused to acknowledge common terms used to stigmatize female participants indignantly saying he did not want to be associated as a man who uses those terms. He argued girls are included and equal in all aspects of his life, and that his participation in the organization had changed him: 'if they played, I played, but it was not the same as it is now [in VIDA] where the boys will say, *I want that girl for my team.* Before everyone said girls don't play football'.

When the rain became too heavy to play, Felipe, Valentina, and a handful of young men and I ran down a steep hill and stumbled into the office. Recognizing that Valentina and I were the only women in the office, I imitated the young men's posture and actions. Cold and wet, we sat around a table swapping laughs. Felipe, speaking in full vibrato said, 'Valentina, *make* us coffee'. Without question, she complied. We drank coffee as Valentina proceeded to mop the muddy floors. The young men sat relaxed at the table and made jokes until it was time to go to school, never once acknowledging Valentina or her efforts. Once alone, I asked Felipe why he told Valentina to make everyone coffee. Without hesitation, he said, 'she's a woman, it's her role' (Field notes, Chévere, June).

These two examples demonstrate the normalized processes of gendered socialization occurring on and off the football field at VIDA. In this setting, a social hierarchy is being normalized and reproduced in action, thus re-establishing and reproducing the coloniality of gender, where society prizes boys/masculinity over girls/femininity. Below, I will explore how boys are socially excluded too because of gender-based socialization and where girls are ordered in this gender-based hierarchy.

Can boys play with dolls?

For most interlocutors in Chévere, the question 'Can boys play with dolls?' was novel and antiquated. For example, participants Felipe, Yuliza, and Cesi responded 'yes*'* without hesitation and motioned for me to go to the next question. Laura, an entrepreneur in her 50s and aunt of a female participant, also thought the question erroneous and silly:

> It is nothing! For example, 'oh, look at that gentleman in a pink shirt!' They look elegant. Now I have seen footballers in fuchsia! And for men, what do they have? It does not mean anything because the person is one thing and the clothes are another, right!?! (Entrepreneur, Chévere, Laura)

Mother, Lizeth, was also in agreement. When her young son and VIDA participant overheard her answer, he yelled and giggled, 'I like to play with Barbieeees!' Paloma, a local social worker not associated with VIDA linked the question to previous labels and social roles:

> Of course! Because we say there has been influence. That is why I tell you that before we saw a lot of machismo because before the boys could only play with cars and the girls with dolls, and now that has changed because the boys play with dolls and no one says he's a different gender or he'll become homosexual, nothing! There is no problem. And also, role-play helps them. When they grow up and suddenly they are a man, they are better with babies because they have played with dolls as a little boy, yes? As he is already sensitized a little more. In the case of the girls, they already play with cars and it is no longer that it's for boys, so a little difference has been removed between woman and man, and with that responsibilities are more egalitarian. (Social worker, Chévere, Paloma)

Men were more reluctant in their responses. For example, Sebastian, a local taxi driver in his 60s, discussed his changing opinion on the subject, 'Well, I think that what happened is that in my youth it was frowned upon, at least a boy who was seen playing with a doll was wrong. But I have realized that that is not bad'. Julio, a VIDA employee, was not certain of his opinion. 'It depends' he said. Whereas, Jaime, a teenager who dates a female participant, explained how the Chévere community might interpret boys playing with dolls:

> It can be seen as wrong, but I do not think that it is wrong. If there is actually something wrong, then, yes, of course! But that boys play with something of a girl, it is not very normal for us here, and the parents always worry. It is normal for girls to play with things from boys, but from boys to girls, No! From girls to boys, yes! (Military student, Chévere, Jaime)

In other words, unpacking Jaime's innocuous statement we see that outside VIDA's CoP, it is not ideal for a girl to participate in a masculine-labelled pursuit (i.e., football), however, it is much worse for a boy to engage with actions associated with femininity (i.e., Barbie). When responding to this question, adult male interlocutors (aged over 30) in Chévere were less comfortable than female interlocutors (of all ages) and displayed confusion. Potentially they hesitated in fear of judgement, but they did engage with the question. This was not the case in Bacano, however.

In Bacano, the clear answer from community members Brayan (man, 20s), Carolina Herrera (woman, 60s) and Patricia (woman, 40s), was a convincing 'no', identifying that the question was culturally inappropriate. Regardless of interlocutor age or gender, the response was that it is inappropriate for boys to play with dolls. Cristina, a student social worker, explained the issue at hand: 'Precisely because of the macho

culture here, if someone sees a boy with a doll, they start to discriminate, to push away or to disturb in a certain way'. VIDA employee Liliana concurred:

> Even these imaginary games reflect gender. The girl is the one that cleans the toilet, the one that has to cook. It has been difficult to break that scheme because it still continues at present. I'll give you a practical example. A boy cannot play with a doll, and a girl cannot play with a car, because one is a game for girls and the other only for boys. These beliefs and traditions come from generation to generation and are totally cultural, the grandparents raised the parents, who raised children and thus are raising the grandchildren. (Staff member, Bacano, Liliana)

Terrance, a community member who spends his days at the senior citizen's centre, provided an example for Liliana's argument: 'My grandchildren play all the time, the boys and the girl. I have only one granddaughter, she likes sports a lot, just like her mother, the boy too. I'm going to enrol him [in VIDA] because he likes football'. Noting that he identified his granddaughter is interested in sport, but only mentioned enrolling his grandson in VIDA, I asked about boys and dolls. He responded unequivocally, 'No, no no no! I do not share that, although it happens, but the girl is a girl, and the boy is a boy. How can a girl and a boy play with the same toys?'

Interlocutors' responses, particularly those in Bacano, such as Terrance, reflected ideas of binary gender that reveal the coloniality of gender in action. Gendered socialization, reproduced through generations, directly shapes not only how individuals understand masculinity and femininity, but also how individuals perform gender and develop social standards. These normative gendered social processes result in girls and young women's social exclusion in sport and thus in SDP.

Connecting the dots to girls' in/exclusion in SDP

While we sat in a doctor's waiting room, Bacano VIDA employee, Liliana, analyzed how gendered toys and games transfer into the social stigma that surrounds participation in sport and thus VIDA:

> In all sports, I feel stigma. This is for men, and this is for women. Because you see that most of those who practice rollerblading on the coast are girls. It even seems strange for men to skate at all because they consider it to be feminine, more *rose-like*. I think this is changing a little, but it continues to be an issue. That is why I strongly support gender equity. (Staff member, Bacano, Liliana)

What can be drawn from Liliana's statement and the question of childhood gender-based games and toys explored above, is that gendered rules do not end with childhood but become habitus, reproduced through daily normative interactions.

In response to being asked if gendered labels constrain girls' participation and thus social inclusion in VIDA, youth leader Diego said: 'There should be many girls who may want to participate in these activities but are not linked in the processes [of playing, in order] to avoid such [derogatory] comments that are exclusive [to female participants]'. When asked the same question, Jhon, a father, and volunteer in his late 20s noted the stigma connected to girls' participation shapes the restrictions parents determine for their children:

> There are girls who suddenly like football but do not play because the father says *I do not like you to play football!* Because they have already seen that girls sometimes become lesbians. The parents have this in mind: *My girl will not play for such reason!* (VIDA volunteer and parent, Bacano, Jhon)

He continued, noting that he is addressing the majority of families in Bacano.

Victor's son participates in VIDA, but his daughter does not. During the interview, she sat behind a door, peeking her head out to listen, but refusing to speak. When discussing stigma and girls social inclusion in sport, a fiery discussion ensued. Victor first addressed the heteronormative social standards breached when girls play football:

> The stigmatizations are there, *machorra* or *machito*. Oh, of course! It is very frequent to hear the word when a girl plays. They say hembra, but adding a masculine pronoun and female termination as an insult. They say lesbian, but society does it innocently because it was a sport for men and now the woman is practicing it. Then [when] they see her, they think [she] is a man… (Truck driver and father of male participant, Bacano, Victor)

Despite recognizing how these labels may insult female participants, he defended the common action of insulting female participants because of the community's low levels of formal education and low socio-economic status. In other words, he identified other colonial residues of import that create diverse oppressions and multiple exclusions.

A Bacano community member not associated with VIDA, Reginald, noted that change is happening, but that there are many 'stumbling blocks' and 'contradictions' along the way:

> We have had cases where gentlemen have stopped and insulted the girls, saying *This is not for you, you serve for cooking and for washing, to iron, this is for males!* But we do not share that idea, and every day we are demonstrating that women have the ability to develop any activity just like men, they are the same. (Laborer, Bacano, Reginald)

Observations and interviews revealed that members of VIDA's CoP did not use derogatory words towards female participants. As such, I identify VIDA's CoP as a limited bubble. The bubble consists of participants, their direct kin and the community members who intentionally interact with VIDA. My few interactions with teenage boys not enrolled with the program, thus outside the bubble, in Chévere, were contrastingly uncomfortable. On multiple occasions, I immediately felt disempowered (Field notes, Chévere, May).[x] As such, I do not doubt my interlocutors' claims that language within and outside VIDA is different. VIDA offers female participants access to participate in sport, however, even within VIDA female participants become naturally sidelined to the periphery. The examples above demonstrate that girls and young women's peripheral participation and social exclusion is part and parcel of normative social elements – derogatory language, gendered socialization, and social stigma. What is also evident is the connection of these elements to the reproduction of the coloniality of gender.

Conclusion

Lugones (2010) and Connell (2007) argue current day hegemonic gendered social structures are a repercussion of the gendered dynamic of colonization. An example supporting this argument is Colombia's current day normative gender binary. In this binary, women are restricted in personal presentation and physical space, while men are encouraged to roam, albeit in specific and constrained macho ways that align with power and dominance. Colombian power structures have created and reproduced extensive limitations to gender/sexuality that directly constrain girls and young women's social inclusion in sport. A critical social process that hinders young women's social inclusion in VIDA and sport, in general, is gendered socialization.

Gendered socialization includes, but is not limited to, gendered appearance (e.g.,

girls need long hair and earrings), childhood games and toys (e.g., dolls for girls), gender/sex roles (e.g., the woman is the homemaker), and gendered space (e.g., the woman occupies private space). These gendered 'ways of being' maintain a gendered social hierarchy that crosses class lines, playing out to various degrees, but ultimately reproducing the coloniality of gender as normative. In both research locations, it is common for girls to experience explicit restriction from playing sport because of the stereotypes and stigmas connecting sport to heterosexual masculinity and women's homosexuality.

In this paper, I analyzed how language, gender-based socialization, and social stigma shape and constrain girls' social inclusion in an SDP CoP in Colombia. I also addressed how community members are engaged in the reproduction and resistance of gendered sport. Colonial residues materialized in both the gendered nature of activities (e.g., sports, toys) and with the overall display of heteronormativity. While interlocutors recognized positive steps forward in terms of girls' social inclusion in sport, there are critical limitations to this, such as verbal denigration, family restrictions, and a shallow normative interpretation of equality that does not consider equity. These examples demonstrate how the coloniality of gender perpetuates and reinforces girls and young women as peripheral actors in sport.

The findings of this research demonstrate how female participants are required to negotiate spaces with contradictory gendered meanings. Through their participation, without choice, female participants create tension as they engage with an arena previously reserved for boys and men. While on one hand, data revealed the restrictions that demarcate what is socially acceptable for girls and boys are being slightly altered, it revealed, on the other hand, that the overarching social hierarchy that subordinates anyone not identifying as a heterosexual (white) man is unchanged. This is clear

because boys, by and large, continue to be restricted from doing anything associated with femininity. This research provides an example of how social transformation for women within masculine structures is difficult to achieve (Puwar 2004). Furthermore, it supports Chawanksy and Itani's (2017) request for more diverse research on the colonial power matrix in SDP.

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[i] The organization extends itself beyond community-sport programming. Its leaders, coaches, social workers, and psychologists reach out to parents, siblings, and community members through community events, such as parent meetings where coaches demonstrate daily activities and social workers talk about values and goals. Teaching and practicing 'good values' is central to the SDP organization's mission and community. Participants, parents, and volunteers rattled off values that align with the neoliberal 'good, active citizen' such as 'self-control' and 'personal responsibility' at the beginning of interviews.

[ii] "The inclusion of girls in sport and play activities alongside boys is a powerful means to alter gender stereotypes at the community level"; "Sport activities give women and girls access to public spaces that allow them to gather together, develop social networks and meet with each other in a safe environment"; and, "Training female teachers as 'coaches' effectively develops and mobilizes female community leaders and role models, and increases community commitment to include girls in sport" (Read and Bingham, 2009, p. xvi).

[iii] Many feminist researchers are now using the terms "sex/gender" or "gender/sex" to "emphasize that when you compare the sexes you are always looking at the product of an inextricable mix of biological sex and gender constructions" (Fine 2017, 26). This differentiation does not create smooth reading however, and often the terms are conflated. The focus of this text is gender ascriptions, not biological sex.

[iv] This research is timely, as scholars such as Chawanksy and Itani (2017) request more diverse research on the colonial power matrix in contemporary physical culture and Darnell and Hayhurst (2011) suggest scholars embrace a decolonizing sporting praxis.

[v] Although aspects of Spain's governing systems were not completely foreign to Amerindian groups, the exploitative application of these systems was. Spain's systematic abuse of peoples, coupled with European diseases, decimated the indigenous populations in Colombia (Viveros and Gil 2006). The ramification of community destabilization was far reaching as people lost community protection. By the 1560s, 90 percent of the indigenous population had died, meaning only 300,000 people survived the destabilization of their communities (Mahoney 2010). Relocation programs and population collapse resulted in scattered communities, lost cultural identity and lost knowledges; 'the dwindling populations then became intertwined with the Spanish population, driving high rates of miscegenation' (Mahoney 2010, 107). By the mid-1600s, the growth of the settler population and institutionalized ways of life stemming from the metropolis such as Christianity, Spanish festivals, entertainment and markets revealed the extent of Spain's influence and authority (Mahoney, 2010).

vi Post-colonial theory and the decolonial option both criticize colonial rule, but there are key distinctions between the two. Decolonial thinking emerged from intellectuals located in the South (Latin America and Africa). It places emphasis on Spanish and Portuguese invasion starting in the 15th century. It exposes how the modern-capitalist world system continues to exploit the colonized through racial logic. And, it calls for a disruption of the Western/European epistemological status quo.

vii For example, if any number of women is in a room, they are addressed in the plural word for women, 'ellas'; however, if a single man enters and joins those women, the pronoun changes to a male-associated term, 'ellos', meaning men.

viii Yuliza also taught me that among groups of friends some derogatory slang words, such as marrica, which means fag, gay or pussy, are used as terms of endearment.

ix Although these derogatory slang words felt extremely familiar in my vocabulary (consider that I am not a native speaker, so I learned slang words at the research locations), I do not recall and have zero notes demonstrating female participants labelled with derogatory words – tomboy, lesbian, and dyke. So my engagement with these words is derived from formal interviews and casual discussion alone.

x For example, a young man not associated with VIDA faced me, mere inches, on a semi-full public bus when leaving Chévere. When I moved away from him, he followed me, staring at my eyes. I publicly asked a man I knew to stand between us, and he left me alone. On another occasion, when I managed the field office, a group of young men not associated with VIDA arrived at the door when participants received bread. When I denied them bread, they subsequently mocked my Spanish accent and publicly harassed me.