The Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework: Theorizing about How Sport

Organizations Contribute to Crisis Response and Recovery

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Abstract

During crises, sport organizations are said to play an important social role by facilitating community recovery; however, the literature lacks an overarching theoretical framework to explain how. Drawing on the social identity approach, we argue sport organizations can enhance well-being during crises to the extent that they foster shared identification among current and potential members. The Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework reflects this assertion, illustrating leadership functions to create an organization's in-group identity that satisfies the needs of members in response to a crisis. It further outlines the SPRInT (Social support, Purpose and meaning, Relatedness, In-group norms, and Trust) pathways, which mediate the effect of organizational identification on member well-being. Our framework extends prior work examining organizational-level antecedents of identification with a sport organization by considering how leadership functions may foster organizational identification for individuals both internal and external to the organization. Moreover, it demonstrates how sport organizations may lead shared responses to address community needs and contribute to population well-being.

Keywords: crisis; COVID-19; health and well-being; social identity; group identification; leadership

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1. Introduction

The first two decades of the 21st century were marked by a series of crises. Notable examples are the 2001 September 11 terrorist attacks, 2003 SARS outbreak, the 2007–2008 financial crisis, 2010 Haiti earthquake, 2010–2012 Arab Spring, 2016 European floods, and 2019-2020 Australian bushfires. Crises can diminish population well-being[1] (Van Hal, 2015), and such detrimental impacts are likely to accelerate in the next decade with the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (Kelland, 2020) and growing incidence of extreme weather events (Orr & Inoue, 2019). The primary responsibility for alleviating impacts from a crisis lies with organizations operating in affected communities (Stallings, 1973). This includes public-sector and non-profit organizations and, increasingly, a range of businesses (Ballesteros et al., 2017).

In this respect, sport organizations are said to play an important social role during—and in the aftermath of—crises by boosting community morale (Wenner, 1993) and mobilizing resources for affected residents (Inoue & Havard, 2015). This societal function of sport organizations was seemingly evident amid the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, during the country's first COVID-19 lockdown, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson underscored the importance of restarting elite sport competitions behind closed doors by arguing that they could "provide a much-needed boost to national morale" (BBC Sport, 2020b, para. 4). Across the world, sport organizations and their members implemented a range of initiatives (e.g., donations, fundraising, health promotion campaigns)—beyond normal patterns of delivery—to mitigate damages caused by COVID-19 (e.g., Morse, 2020; National Basketball Association, 2020). Given these examples, together with the growing research exploring the capacity of sport organizations to promote health and well-being (Edwards & Rowe, 2019; Inoue, Sato, et al., 2020), it is essential to understand how sport

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[1] Well-being is defined broadly to encompass the optimal physical, psychological, and social functioning of people (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2020). In addition, population well-being refers to the well-being of a given population (e.g., local residents) as a whole (Arora et al., 2016).

organizations may help lessen damage from crises and contribute to population well-being.

To date, researchers have shown that well-being may be influenced through services (e.g., competitions, events, programs) offered by competitive sport teams (Doyle et al., 2016), community sport clubs (Misener, 2020), participatory sport event entities (Sato et al., 2016), and sport-for-development organizations (Schulenkorf & Siefken, 2019). With specific reference to crises, there is preliminary evidence that sport events and programs can serve as settings where people restore and enhance their well-being in post-crisis periods (Inoue, Funk, et al., 2015; Kunz, 2009). However, the literature lacks an overarching theoretical perspective to make sense of *how* sport organizations may contribute to population well-being during and post-crises.[2] As crises may limit access to sport services (Grix et al., 2020), a framework is required to demonstrate underlying social and psychological mechanisms that can be activated by sport organizations, in the absence of normal service delivery.

We articulate a set of social psychological processes that determine how a sport organization may lead shared responses to address community needs and exert positive influences on well-being during crises. Our primary contribution is the Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework (see Figure 1), which we develop based on the social identity approach (SIA; Abrams & Hogg, 1990) and its applications to leadership (S. A. Haslam et al., 2020; Hogg, 2001) and health and well-being (C. Haslam et al., 2018; Jetten et al., 2017). A central tenet of the SIA is that group membership influences individuals' psychological and behavioral responses to social events (e.g., crises), and this effect increases as people develop a shared sense of identification (Reicher & Drury, 2020). This is because, when people identify with a group, they define themselves as interchangeable on some shared characteristic (e.g., supporting the same sport team), which drives them to internalize the group's norms and collaborate with other members to cope with a crisis (Drury et al., 2019).

The concept of identity has been examined extensively in the sport management literature, especially in relation to sport consumption (Lock & Heere, 2017). However, the

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[2] Hereafter, the phrase "during crises" (or "during a crisis") is used to also refer to the post-crisis periods when impacts from crises persist.

term has been defined in myriad ways, without thorough consideration of the inherent contradictions and differences between underlying approaches. Lock and Heere (2017) argue that sport management research into identity tends to draw from identity theory (e.g., Stryker, 1968) or the SIA (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Both frameworks are relevant to the domain of sport management; however, in this theoretical advance, we draw from the SIA to theorize about how sport organizations can achieve collective influence over current and potential in-group members during crises. Because of its value in explaining group and collective behavior, the application of the SIA helps us make sense of how sport organizations may define and communicate responses to crises that lead to well-being outcomes for a collective of individuals who share the identities created.

Using the SIA, previous studies (e.g., Inoue, Wann, et al., 2020; Wegner et al., 2020) have provided evidence linking sport consumption with health and well-being outcomes. However, there is a paucity of knowledge about how sport organizations can shape and lead identities that have implications for population well-being. In this theoretical advance, we extend prior work in two ways. First, we demonstrate how leaders[3] cultivate and communicate identities that are contextually meaningful during crises. Second, we link these leader actions with the mobilization of psychological resources that translate the effects of organizational identification to well-being outcomes.

In what follows, we clarify the context of the Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework by defining and classifying crises. Next, we review the central tenets of the SIA to provide a theoretical basis for the framework. We then illustrate our framework and its propositions by referring to sport organizations' response and relief efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. We conclude this article by discussing how our theorizing may advance the social identity literature in sport management and provide insights into sport organizations' responses to future crises beyond COVID-19.

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[3] The term "leader" is intended broadly, to include both individuals with formal leadership positions (e.g., team and league executives, non-profit executive board members, team managers) and members of sport organizations leading relief efforts (e.g., athletes and employees showing active engagement).

2. Defining and Classifying Crises

Crises broadly refer to situations where "many members of a social system fail to receive expected conditions of life from the system" (Barton, 1970, as cited in Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977, p. 23). Such situations can undermine sport organizations' ability to continue their normal operations (Shipway et al., 2021), requiring leaders and members to develop new norms and shared understandings because conventional ones no longer guide appropriate action (Stallings, 1973). Examples of crises include natural disasters, public health emergencies, terrorist attacks, armed conflicts, climate change, financial crises, and civil unrest (e.g., protests, riots) (Kuipers & Welsh, 2017). In addition, there are a range of industrial crises (e.g., environmental pollution, industrial accidents, product injuries), caused by technological and communication failures and human actions within and between organizations (Shrivastava et al., 1988).

One way to classify crises is to place them on a continuum of consensus (Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Stallings, 1973). Some crises are classified as consensus crises, wherein there is little disagreement about the situation or how to respond (Stallings, 1973). Notable examples are natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, floods), which have been shown to lead to common interpretations of the situation and collective actions to support affected residents (Ntontis et al., 2018).

Other crisis situations may cause a high degree of disagreement—or in extreme circumstances, conflict—about the definition of a situation and how to respond (Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Stallings, 1973). Such dissensus crises are commonly observed when communities face civil unrest. For example, Stallings (1973) illustrated how racial civil unrest that spread across U.S. cities during the 1960s led to widespread disputes about whether the situations should be defined as crises, what methods should be used to reduce the threats caused to communities, and what were desired outcomes to resolve the situations. A high degree of dissensus was also evident in the Black Lives Matter movement. According to a survey by the Pew Research Center in 2020, while the majority of U.S. adults supported the movement, the level of support differed by political party affiliation: Over 90% of

respondents affiliated with, or leaning to, the Democratic Party indicated their support for the movement, in contrast to 40% of Republicans and Republican leaners (Parker et al., 2020).

A handful of crises can be placed in an intermediate position in the consensus–dissensus continuum (Stallings, 1973), and this likely applies to the COVID-19 pandemic. On one hand, COVID-19 yielded good levels of public compliance with government guidelines and law (Office for National Statistics, 2020), and across the world there was a high level of acceptance toward a solution (i.e., taking a vaccine when it becomes available) to end the pandemic (Boyon, 2020). On the other hand, it led to resistance, conspiracy theories, and rejection of desirable behaviors (e.g., social distancing) by some (Gollwitzer et al., 2020).

We clarify two additional points regarding the above classification of consensus and dissensus crises. First, in today's political climate, even consensus crises, such as natural disasters, may become controversial and contentious. For example, during the early days of the 2019-20 bushfires in Australia, a top governmental official's comments about criticizing those who attributed the crisis to climate change provoked widespread controversy, dividing the country when unified support was needed to enable effective response and relief efforts (Remeikis, 2019). Second, for all crisis types, it is the responsibility of organizations operating in affected communities to engage residents with common needs and interests; this responsibility becomes particularly crucial when dissensus occurs (Stallings, 1973). In this regard, social identity scholars suggest that leaders have the capacity to promote a shared sense of identification within and outside their organizations to facilitate collaborations among individuals with differing views toward an issue (Hogg, 2001; Reicher et al., 2005). In turn, the enhanced sense of identification contributes to individual and collective recovery from crises (Drury et al., 2019). This social identity perspective is explained next.

3. Social Identity Approach

The SIA commonly refers to two interrelated theories (Abrams & Hogg, 1990): social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987). According to social identity theory, a person's sense of self comprises not only personal identities, but also social identities deriving from membership of groups that are used to

define self-concept in collective terms (i.e., "who we are" not just "who I am") (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The need to maintain a positive self-concept motivates individuals to seek and continue membership in a repertoire of desirable social groups that are favorably distinct or differentiated from out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Extending this point, a key proposition of self-categorization theory is that social identity is made possible through a process of self-stereotyping whereby individuals self-categorizes as interchangeable members of a group based on one or more shared values, beliefs, or characteristics (Turner et al., 1987, 1994). It is the social and cognitive process of self-categorization that enables shared identification with other in-group members and affects one's psychological and behavioral responses in social context (Turner et al., 1994). For example, group membership is enough for members to (not) help unknown individuals that (do not) belong to the same group (Levine et al., 2005). Crucially, when a given social identity becomes salient in a person's self-concept, it motivates behaviors that contribute to achieving a group's purposes and goals (Turner et al., 1994).

The focus of early social identity researchers was to understand the influences of group membership and identification on intergroup relations and conflict (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, a new body of research has emerged since 2000, applying the SIA to explain important social phenomena, including—but not limited to—leadership (S. A. Haslam et al., 2020; Hogg, 2001), and health and well-being (C. Haslam et al., 2018; Jetten et al., 2017). First, the SIA to leadership (hereafter "identity leadership") is concerned with the cultivation of a shared sense of who "we" are, and places leaders as socially and contextually aware actors that seek to exemplify meaningful aspects of in-group social identity (Hogg, 2001; Reicher et al., 2005). Crises provoke significant changes to the social and contextual circumstances in which sport organizations and their surrounding communities operate (Wenner, 1993). Such changes may result in the formation of new forms of shared identity that enable collaboration among in-group members or organizations to collectively deal with a crisis (Drury et al., 2019). Therefore, a particular appeal of identity leadership is its attention to the roles leadership and leaders play in creating a compelling vision for how in-

group identity is defined in response to dynamic contextual circumstances —such as crises (Hogg, 2001; Reicher et al., 2005).

Second, the SIA to health and well-being has been used to investigate when and how membership in groups affects personal and collective well-being (C. Haslam et al., 2018; Jetten et al., 2017). Researchers using this approach show that when people identify with groups, they gain access to psychological resources (e.g., social support, relatedness, meaning) from other in-group members (Cruwys et al., 2014; Jetten et al., 2017). These resources are protective factors that alleviate the detrimental effects of adversity and stressful events, thereby playing a crucial role in restoring, maintaining, and enhancing well-being (C. Haslam et al., 2018).

4. The Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework

Building on the SIA, our central assertion is that sport organizations can contribute to population well-being during crises to the extent that they foster shared identification among current and potential group members to galvanize support towards relief efforts. The Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework is developed to reflect this assertion. First, drawing on identity leadership theorizing (Hogg, 2001; Reicher et al., 2005), our framework illustrates how sport organizations and their leaders can work to create in-group social identity that satisfies the needs of current and potential members during a crisis. Second, by applying the SIA to health and well-being (C. Haslam et al., 2018; Jetten et al., 2017), we argue that the SPRInT (Social support, Purpose and meaning, Relatedness, In-group norms, and Trust) pathways mediate the effect of organizational identification on well-being. Finally, we propose two contextual factors—organizational resilience and consensus about crisis response—that may define the boundary conditions (Busse et al., 2017) of our theoretical propositions.

4.1. Organizational identification

People may subjectively identify with a variety of social groups or categories, such as gender, family, religion, recreational groups, and local communities, to maintain their positive social identity (Sani, 2012). Ashforth and Mael's (1989) foundational work

illustrated that such group identification can be extended to the context of organizations, advancing the term *organizational identification*. By adopting their conceptualization, we define organizational identification as a perception of oneness or self-categorization with a (sport) organization. Our theorizing considers different sport organizations with which people may identify, such as competitive sport teams (Heere & James, 2007), professional leagues (Hills et al., 2019), non-profit sport organizations (Wegner et al., 2020), and community sport clubs (Lock et al., 2015). The commonality shared by each form of organization is that it brings individuals together into organizational, participatory, or spectating contexts that offer meaningful sources of social identity.

Four points should be noted regarding key features of organizational identification. First, individuals identify with organizations even "in the absence of formal membership" (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003, p. 77). Hence, organizational identification can occur for any self-categorized members of a sport organization, including not only employees and individuals holding formal club membership, but also fans, spectators, participants, and residents. Second, organizational identification is a form of group identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Therefore, we refer to self-categorized members of a sport organization as *in-group members*, who distinguish themselves from members of one or more *out-groups* (i.e., individuals who do not identify with the organization). In addition, we use the term *potential (in-group) members* to refer to those individuals who did not identify with a sport organization prior to a crisis but may self-categorize as in-group members during the crisis because of the organization's efforts to redefine its in-group boundaries (see Section 4.2 for further discussion about this point).

Third, an organization's in-group identity consists of different elements of the organization, such as its leadership, mission, and prototypical members (e.g., employees), with which people may identify (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). For sport organizations, such elements may include—but are not limited to—organizational leadership, sport teams and their members (e.g., coaches, players), and facilities (Delia & James, 2018). Thus, we conceptualize organizational identification as broadly including identification with all

elements of the sport organization.

Fourth, one acknowledged advantage of identification with sport organizations over other forms of group identification is that it maps onto other social groups and communities (Heere et al., 2011; Heere & James, 2007; Schulenkorf, 2010). This characteristic could enable sport organizations to unite people (including those who did not previously identify) from different social groups and contribute to broader relief efforts during a crisis, which gives a rationale for why identification with sport organizations warrants focused theorizing among other types of organizations.

4.2. Identity leadership to foster organizational identification during crises

Determinants of identification with sport organizations in non-crisis times have been discussed extensively (e.g., Lock et al., 2011; Swanson & Kent, 2015; Wann, 2006). Therefore, the focus of the current framework is to illustrate how organizations can foster meaningful identification in response to crises—beyond the previously documented determinants. By applying the notion of identity leadership, we discuss how organizations and their leaders may alter two main characteristics of the organizations' in-group identity— in-group inclusiveness and shared identity content—to foster identification during crises. In addition, leader prototypicality—the degree to which a person exemplifies the organizational response (Hogg, 2001; Swanson & Kent, 2014)—is identified as a moderator that determines the effects of the two characteristics on organizational identification.

4.2.1. In-group inclusiveness. Typically, sport organizations operate in relation to defined audiences (e.g., season ticket holders, club members, event attendees, program participants) that have an interest in the services, products, or activities offered (Funk et al., 2016). During crises, however, if the boundaries of an in-group remain confined to its existing members or participants, it may inhibit organizational efforts to enhance the well-being of a broader population (e.g., residents of a local community). Thus, to make a meaningful contribution to relief efforts at the level deemed important by leaders, a sport organization may need to redefine the inclusiveness of in-group boundaries in the short-term to attract individuals who do not normally identify with the organization. *In-group*

inclusiveness refers to a shared understanding of who is and who is not included within a group (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996). Redefining the inclusiveness of in-group boundaries in context is the result of leaders' decision-making, communication, and negotiation with their followers.[4] Effective leaders can cultivate definitions of an in-group that enhance peoples' perceptions of its inclusiveness. In turn, constructing a vision of who the identity is for (i.e., who is included in "we" or "us") provides information about who leaders seek to influence during a crisis (Reicher & Haslam, 2019; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996).

Sport organizations' identities often overlap those of the geographic communities in which they operate (Delia & James, 2018; Heere & James, 2007). Thus, one strategy leaders may use to redefine in-group boundaries is to harness associated geographical identities. For example, during COVID-19, local football rivals, Manchester City FC and Manchester United FC, made a collective donation of £100,000 to support food banks (i.e., non-profits tackling the issue of hunger) in Greater Manchester to help meet increased demand due to the pandemic. Illustrating a temporary and contextual redefinition of in-group boundaries to envision an inclusive in-group in response to the virus outbreak, leaders of the two clubs issued a joint statement, which read: "*We* are proud of the role *our* [i.e., both clubs'; emphasis added] supporters play in helping local food banks [i.e., shared cause]" (Morse, 2020, para. 4). From the perspective of identity leadership, the statement is instructive, as it temporarily redefined the boundaries of the two rival clubs to activate an identity that included members of both clubs by focusing on support for a pressing community need.

As another example, executive boards of some British golf clubs made the decision to open their courses to the public during the Covid-19 lockdown to enable residents to use the land for socially distanced exercise (Dunsmuir, 2020). This decision addressed an urgent community need, as the country's chronic shortage of parks and green space had made it difficult for some residents to observe social distancing rules while exercising. The chairperson of one club explained the decision as follows: "The ability to get some fresh air

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[4] It is important to note that in-group boundaries are defined in context and, therefore, not permanently. As such, sport organizations that redefine in-group boundaries inclusively in the face of a crisis may choose to revert to previous identity definitions as context changes after the crisis is resolved.

and exercise will be the salvation for many and *our board* and *members* are keen to do what *we* can to support *everybody* [emphasis added]" (Dunsmuir, 2020, para. 10). Again, the language used in the statement is instructive because it was a decision made by *our board and members* about how to support the needs of *everybody* in the community. Through this decision, the club's leadership temporarily expanded the boundary of the in-group to include residents who were non-club members, fostering shared identification among members and other residents by attaching the decision to a common need for safe exercise spaces.

As these examples show, to foster meaningful organizational identification that can support crisis recovery, it is important for leaders to signal that the in-group identity is temporarily redefined in response to the crisis context. Doing so creates a perception that out-group members are *included* in redefined in-group boundaries, thus rendering the identity salient as a solution to community needs. Such temporal redefinition may involve responding by briefly revising the focus of global organizations (such as Manchester United and Manchester City) toward pressing local needs, or by broadening the focus of local clubs to capture an entire geographical area (as shown by some British golf clubs). In either case, redefining the inclusiveness of in-group identity during a crisis is essential because as the number of individuals that self-categorize with the group increases in a given context (e.g., local community), so do the psychological resources available to members (Drury et al., 2019). Thus, our first proposition is as follows:

Proposition 1: During a crisis, leaders of a sport organization may strengthen organizational identification among current and potential in-group members by temporarily redefining the inclusiveness of the organization's in-group boundaries.

4.2.2. Shared identity content. In addition to redefining in-group boundaries, leaders need to articulate identity content in response to the crisis that is pertinent to community needs. *Identity content* refers to the meanings associated with an in-group identity in context (Livingstone & Haslam, 2008; Reicher et al., 2005). It helps current and potential in-group members answer the question of "what 'us' means and does not mean" (Slater et al., 2019, p. 272). Notably, the content (or meaning) of a sport organization's in-group identity is unfixed

and susceptible to changes in context (Delia & James, 2018). This flexible feature of identity content makes it important for leaders to communicate not only who is included in group boundaries, but what the in-group stands for in response to the contextual changes created by a crisis.

People strengthen their identification with a group to the extent that its identity content "matches [their] own sense of who they are" (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003, p. 80). From this perspective, a central function of identity leadership in our framework is to develop and communicate *shared identity content* that accentuates what people included within the (re)defined in-group boundaries have in common in terms of goals, interests, or needs in relation to the crisis or response (S. A. Haslam et al., 2020; Slater et al., 2019). Highlighting commonalities will render the identity content attractive and salient as a solution to the issues created by the crisis, which will, in turn, increase the likelihood that current and potential members will identify (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003).

When a community is struck by a crisis, it results in a societal expectation that members of sport organizations should contribute to response and relief efforts (Finch, 2016; Inoue & Havard, 2015). Thus, leaders of a sport organization may seek to cultivate shared identity content that accentuates similarities between members by creating and communicating a common mission to contribute to, or alleviate, ill-effects caused by the crisis. For example, in relation to Manchester United and Manchester City's joint charitable initiative described above, some supporters of the two clubs had engaged in efforts to support local food banks prior to the initiative (Bajkowski, 2020). Thus, through their decisions to make collective donations, the clubs' leaders were able to accentuate similarities that were already salient concerns for supporters of both clubs. By temporarily revising the in-group boundaries around the city of Manchester, both clubs were able to galvanize supporters around shared identity content that was known to be important. In this sense, such shifts in identity content make it possible that even defined rivals can share a common purpose by activating different social group memberships (i.e., geographical community).

Another example is the International Surfing Association's use of International

Surfing Day 2020 to feature several surfers across the world who had been actively involved with COVID-19 relief efforts and encourage the sharing of similar stories on social media (Shefferd, 2020). This represented a departure from the organization's past annual celebrations that included beach clean-ups and paddle outs, highlighting a contextual shift to more relevant identity content created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In explaining this shift in focus, the President of the International Surfing Association stated: "International Surfing Day this year has taken on even more importance and is not just a chance to celebrate our sport, but to recognize the generosity and gestures of kindness from the surfing community across the world" (Shefferd, 2020, para. 10). This statement illustrated the leadership efforts to convey new shared identity content in response to the contextual shifts created by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting that the in-group (i.e., surfing community) was defined by the common mission of "generosity and kindness." We therefore propose that, for a sport organization to foster organizational identification that is meaningful to crisis relief, leaders may need to articulate shared identity content that aligns with the needs and goals, or crisis response efforts, of the individuals and communities the organization endeavors to affect.

> **Proposition 2:** During a crisis, leaders of a sport organization may strengthen organizational identification among current and potential in-group members by creating shared identity content that accentuates common experiences or response needs created by the crisis.

4.2.3. Leader prototypicality as a moderator. Identity leadership researchers assert that the efficacy of a leader's efforts to redefine the inclusiveness of in-group boundaries (Proposition 1) and create shared identity content (Proposition 2) is dependent upon followers' perceptions that the leader represents the collective interests of the group (Hogg et al., 2012). Current and potential members are likely to be influenced by a leader who is perceived as a prototypical (or model and exemplary) member of the group (i.e., leader prototypicality; Hogg et al., 2012; Swanson & Kent, 2014). The in-group prototype is a fuzzy-set of contextual characteristics that accentuate similarities between in-group members and maximize differences from out-groups (Turner et al., 1987). A leader who accentuates

and embodies similarities between in-group members tends to develop engaged followership because they exemplify the shared interests and goals of members (S. A. Haslam et al., 2020; Hogg et al., 2012). Such a leader enables followers to think that he or she takes a given action to advance the collective interests of a group, rather than to serve his or her own interests (Steffens et al., 2016).

Crises provoke major changes to the social and contextual environment in which sport organizations operate. It follows that the contextual in-group prototype and assessments of leader prototypicality might also change. Therefore, typical leaders (e.g., Presidents, Commissioners, Chairpersons, Chief Executive Officers, Managers) may not be the most effective people to articulate the organizational response to a crisis due to a lack of expertise or experience (S. A. Haslam et al., 2020). Leaders without requisite expertise or experience may struggle to behave in a manner that demonstrates that they can contribute to the crisis response or understand its nuances. Hence, leaders are likely to be viewed as prototypical to the extent that they exemplify and communicate salient features of the crisis that are important to, and shared by, those included within in-group boundaries (Hogg et al., 2012). Marcus Rashford provides a pertinent example of prototypicality during COVID-19. The Manchester United striker became a vocal advocate for free school meals during the crisis to address increasing levels of hunger in Britain's youth. However, rather than his status as a footballer, it was Rashford's honesty about his own childhood, family, and reliance on free school meals to survive that made him prototypical of the cause (Davies, 2020).

Based on the above discussion, we posit that the degree to which in-group members perceive a leader to represent shared interests in relation to a crisis determines how susceptible they are to the leader's efforts to redefine in-group inclusiveness and create shared identity content. Therefore, the following proposition is advanced:

> **Proposition 3**: The effects of in-group inclusiveness and shared identity content on organizational identification depend on the extent to which current and potential in-group members perceive leaders as prototypical of members' shared interests or goals in relation to a crisis.

4.3. SPRInT pathways linking organizational identification with well-being

Next, based on the review of literature regarding the SIA to health and well-being (C. Haslam et al., 2018; Jetten et al., 2017), we propose five mediators—or psychological resources—that establish the relationships between identification with sport organizations (i.e., cultivated through identity leadership during crises) and members' well-being. These include social support, purpose and meaning, relatedness, in-group norms, and trust, which are collectively referred to as the SPRInT pathways. There is an ample body of evidence supporting the well-being benefits of these five psychological resources (C. Haslam et al., 2018). Hence, our focus here is to discuss how identification with sport organizations may mobilize access to each resource for in-group members.

4.3.1. Social support. Effective response to, and recovery from, a crisis requires a substantial amount of social support, which may be delivered in three forms: tangible (i.e., the provision of necessary items and services), emotional (i.e., affective assistance and comfort), and informational support (i.e., sharing of useful information and advice) (Inoue & Havard, 2015; Norris & Kaniasty, 1996). Across these forms, social support can be further classified into received and perceived support, with each uniquely contributing to the alleviation of distress caused by crises (Norris & Kaniasty, 1996). Received social support refers to the actual amount of helping behaviors provided, whereas perceived social support represents receivers' perceptions regarding how "such helping behaviors would be provided when needed" (Norris & Kaniasty, 1996, p. 498). This distinction suggests that increasing not only the amount (i.e., received support) but also perceived availability (i.e., perceived support) of social support is crucial for promoting well-being.

Giving social support to other in-group members is an endeavor which seeks to strengthen the in-group and, as a result, has positive connotations for the self-concept of individuals (S. A. Haslam et al., 2012). In addition, social support is more likely to be appreciated and valued when exchanged in group contexts because it is delivered through a consensual and meaningful framework of understandings and norms shared by in-group members. Consequently, both the actual amount and perceived availability of social support

are likely to increase if providers and receivers of support share a common identity and define themselves as members of the same group (S. A. Haslam et al., 2012).

There is a small but growing body of evidence suggesting that identification with sport organizations can promote acts and perceptions of social support among in-group members. For example, Levine et al. (2005) found that study participants tended to help an injured stranger if shared identification as supporters of the same football team was activated by an experimental stimulus (i.e., having the stranger wear the team's shirt). In addition, regarding the inclusiveness of in-group boundaries (see Proposition 1), when social identity as football fans (rather than as fans of one particular team) was activated, participants tended to help strangers regardless of whether they were dressed as a fan of the favorite or rival team (Levine et al., 2005). With respect to specific forms of social support, scholars have found positive correlations between team identification, perceptions of emotional support, and well-being (Inoue, Funk, et al., 2015; Inoue, Wann, et al., 2020). In addition, sport organizations offer settings where important knowledge and information is shared among their members (Finch, 2016; Inoue et al., 2018). For example, during a crisis, sport organizations may use their social media sites to encourage followers to support relief organizations (Finch, 2016). Drawing upon the existing evidence and social identity theorizing, we develop the following proposition:

> **Proposition 4**: During a crisis, identification with sport organizations can enhance members' well-being by increasing the amount and perceived availability of social support.

4.3.2. Purpose and meaning. The extent to which people can cope with loss and suffering from a crisis depends on their ability to maintain optimism by finding their life purposeful and meaningful (E. E. Smith, 2020). Consistent with this notion, a sense of purpose and meaning has been identified as a key source of well-being beyond hedonic pursuits focusing on happiness (Baumeister et al., 2013). In addition, Lambert et al. (2013) found that individuals tend to report a greater sense of purpose and meaning when they feel that they are a part of a social group. This finding corresponds with the SIA to health and

well-being, which posits that group identification provides people with a sense of purpose and meaning by engendering shared perceptions of who they are and how they are connected with others and society at large (Cruwys et al., 2014).

In relation to sport organizations, Wann et al.'s (2017) study of U.S. university students found a positive relationship between students' identification with their university's intercollegiate athletic team and meaning in life. In a qualitative study of a charity sport event (Filo et al., 2009), participants indicated that they derived meaning from their event participation and this psychological state, in turn, strengthened their attachment to the event and other participants. Similar findings were reported for in-group members of other sport organizations, such as older adult participants of the Senior Games (Kelley et al., 2014) and elite athletes in a national sport team (Lundqvist & Sandin, 2014). In these settings, engagement with the event or team and the communities surrounding them contributed to enhancing participants' (or athletes') sense of purpose and meaning and subsequently well-being. Combining these findings with social identity theorizing, we expect that the relationship between identification with sport organizations and in-group members' well-being is mediated by a positive sense of purpose and meaning in life that is engendered during crises. Our next proposition is:

> **Proposition 5**: During a crisis, identification with sport organizations can enhance
> members' well-being by fostering a sense of purpose and meaning in life.

4.3.3. Relatedness. Maintaining relatedness with others is one of our fundamental psychological needs (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and failing to do so may result in a range of detrimental health consequences, such as depression, increased engagement in health-risk behaviors (e.g., drinking, smoking), and poor physical health (Coyle & Dugan, 2012). During a crisis, people may be exposed to high risks of social isolation (Morita et al., 2015). For example, there was a widespread concern that due to social distancing measures implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19, more people experienced isolation and resultant feelings of loneliness (Wright, 2020). According to the SIA to health and well-being, group identification enables people to feel belonging to a larger society by establishing a sense of

relatedness with others who share similar interests and concerns (Cruwys et al., 2014).

Furthermore, satisfaction of relatedness needs does not require formal membership or

physical interactions with other members (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bhattacharya & Sen,

2003). Instead, the act of self-categorizing with similar others can increase feelings of

relatedness (Lambert et al., 2013).

Mael and Ashforth (2001) contend that identification with spectator sport entities is a

primary form of organizational identification that can foster perceptions of relatedness.

Similarly, Wann (2006) argues that spectators' identification with a local sport team can

contribute to establishing temporary and enduring social connections between followers. This

claim was supported by studies of university students (Wann et al., 2017) and older adults

(Inoue, Wann, et al., 2020), both of which found that spectators' team identification helps

satisfy the need for relatedness by increasing a sense of belonging. Walseth's (2006) research

exploring the experience of immigrant women in Norway demonstrated membership in

community sport clubs can facilitate members' integration into a local community and fulfil

the need for relatedness. This evidence indicates that the relatedness benefits of identification

are not constrained to spectator sport. Therefore, we develop the following proposition:

> **Proposition 6**: During a crisis, identification with sport organizations can enhance
>
> members' well-being by facilitating perceptions of relatedness that the crisis is
>
> experienced with similar others.

4.3.4. In-group norms. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of

promoting individual and collective behavior that is beneficial for the welfare of the public

(Van Bavel et al., 2020). Across the globe, governments and public health agencies published

guidelines reinforcing behaviors intended to decrease transmission of the virus, such as self-

isolation, handwashing, not touching faces, staying at home, and face coverings (Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; The UK Government, 2020). In addition, the World

Health Organization (2020) developed online resources for promoting healthy lifestyle

behaviors, such as healthy eating and physical activity, to help maintain physical and mental

health during quarantine. Meanwhile, engagement in such behaviors was identified as a key

determinant of well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic (Maugeri et al., 2020).

However, encouraging people to sustain long-term behavior change requires more than simply publishing guidelines or resources (Bouton, 2014). This is indicated by numerous cases showing that people ignored or failed to follow government guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic (Henriques, 2020). To overcome this challenge, social psychologists have underscored the role of social norms in getting people to adopt and sustain socially desirable behavior (Miller & Prentice, 2016). As implicit codes of conduct in society, social norms help people understand what constitutes an appropriate behavior or practice in a given context, beyond the information written in formal documents such as laws and government guidelines (Miller & Prentice, 2016).

Social norms exert a particularly large influence on behavior change when they are established among peers from the same social group (DiClemente, 1991). This notion is in line with the SIA to health and well-being, indicating that social norms shared within a group—or *in-group norms*—determine group members' decisions to adopt health-related behaviors (C. Haslam et al., 2018) or behaviors that benefit the public interest in the aftermath of crises (Drury et al., 2019). Relatedly, sport organizations are proposed as an effective setting for promoting socially responsible practices (A. C. Smith & Westerbeek, 2007), with prior work demonstrating that sport teams and athletes can persuade their followers to adopt socially desirable behavior, such as exercising (Inoue, Yli-Piipari, et al., 2015). In addition, sport organizations' past disaster relief efforts (Finch, 2016; Inoue & Havard, 2015), as well as their efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic as illustrated earlier, suggest that they may establish norms for supporting public welfare among in-group members. Such in-group norms (shaped by leaders in context) provide guidance for members when they determine whether to comply with guidelines set by governments or public health agencies, which strengthens the linkage between organizational identification and in-group members' well-being. Hence, we propose:

Proposition 7: During a crisis, identification with sport organizations can enhance members' well-being by creating or reinforcing in-group norms that are conducive to

addressing the issues caused by the crisis.

4.3.5. Trust. The promotion of trust among the public is another key contributor to successful community recovery from adverse events (Drury et al., 2019; Van Bavel et al., 2020). For example, a case study of Indian and Japanese communities affected by earthquakes illustrated that communities reporting high social capital (e.g., trustworthy relationships, active community participation) recovered faster and more effectively than communities reporting low or minimal social capital (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004). By applying the tenets of the SIA to public emergencies, Drury et al. (2019) documented that group identification plays a critical role in building trust among those affected by a crisis because people tend to find others trustworthy if they share the same social identity. In turn, the enhanced sense of trust promotes cooperation within the in-group, which enables collective responses to an emergency (Drury et al., 2019) and contributes to member well-being (Helliwell et al., 2014). This role of group identification, however, must be interpreted with caution because it may not only increase trust among in-group members, but also cause distrust towards those who are in an out-group (Voci, 2006). In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, a decline in trust towards out-group members was evidenced by reports of hostility and hate crimes against those from different ethnic groups (Russell, 2020).

In this regard, sport organizations have the potential to help reconcile this conflicting effect of group identification because they may be connected with—and bridge across—different social categories or groups, such as ethnicity, gender, and religion (Heere et al., 2011; Heere & James, 2007; Schulenkorf, 2010). For example, survey data collected at Japanese professional football matches following the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake demonstrated that spectators reported a greater sense of trust towards other members of their community as their identification with local football clubs increased (Inoue, Funk, et al., 2015). There is also evidence linking participation in community sport events with an enhanced level of social capital, as indicated by the development of trustworthy relationships with members of the local community (Zhou & Kaplanidou, 2018). As discussed earlier, an underlying condition for the efficacy of organizational identification in times of crisis is that

in-group boundaries must be (re)defined to embrace people with different backgrounds or attributes beyond existing members. If such inclusive in-group boundaries are achieved, identification with sport organizations is expected to establish trust among people from different social groups, thus promoting well-being during a crisis. Our final proposition is:

> **Proposition 8:** During a crisis, identification with sport organizations can enhance members' well-being by facilitating trust within the inclusively defined in-group.

4.4. Contextual factors

Every theoretical advance has its boundary conditions, referring to how accurately theoretical propositions are applicable across contexts (Busse et al., 2017; Whetten, 1989). Delineating the exact boundary conditions requires an extensive empirical exploration (Busse et al., 2017) and is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, to provide an initial basis for future research, we propose two contextual factors that may set boundary conditions for the Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework: organizational resilience and consensus about crisis response.

First, organizational resilience refers to an organization's capacity to mobilize resources in a crisis to continue operating and return to a stable state in a timely manner (Shipway & Miles, 2020; Wicker et al., 2013). There is evidence that resilience levels vary across sport organizations and some are insufficiently resourced to cope with impacts from a crisis and engage in effective response and recovery efforts (Wicker et al., 2013). Thus, we expect that the proposed roles of identity leadership in promoting identification and, in turn, member well-being are especially applicable to organizations with adequate levels of resilience that enable them to devote resources to broader relief efforts.

Second, as discussed in Section 2, different crises are associated with varying degrees of consensus about how situations are defined and which responses are deemed appropriate (Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Stallings, 1973). When a high level of consensus emerges, such as in the case of some natural disasters (Ntontis et al., 2018), there would be little obstacle to sport organizations fostering shared identification among the individuals (both current and potential members) included in redefined in-group boundaries, which would, in turn, activate

the SPRInT pathways to enhance member well-being. However, as the level of dissensus increases, so do the challenges facing sport organizations in employing identity leadership. This does not mean organizations are unable to use identity leadership when crises are classified as intermediate (e.g., public health emergencies) or dissensus (e.g., civic unrest) crises. As we illustrated in relation to the first three propositions, even in situations where a crisis causes dissensus, sport organizations and their leaders may promote identification among current and potential members by focusing on a response (e.g., contributing to local food banks or addressing needs for exercise spaces during COVID-19) that would likely receive wide support. Yet, it can be more difficult for organizations to contribute to broader relief efforts when there is a large divide among members and surrounding communities regarding what actions should be taken to resolve a crisis. As such, in general sport organizations might be best placed to focus on immediate crisis recovery that would be less likely to become contentious or political.

5. Discussion

5.1. Theoretical contributions

The Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework—especially through the application of identity leadership (S. A. Haslam et al., 2020; Hogg, 2001)—illustrates how identities are led in social context to redefine in-group boundaries and create identity content that envisions a meaningful response to the community needs created by a crisis. This approach extends prior sport management research examining more conventional organizational-level antecedents (e.g., prestige, fit) of organizational identification (e.g., Swanson & Kent, 2015) by shifting focus to the leadership functions that foster identification among current and future in-group members.

We also advance prior team identification research (see Lock & Heere, 2017, for a recent review) by moving beyond a focus on consumers' motives to identify or organizational outcomes of team identification. There are a few exceptions to this consumer focus. Previous conceptual papers (Heere & James, 2007; Lock & Funk, 2016) illustrate the managerial actions sport organizations can take to strengthen identification among in-group members and

external communities, while Fink et al. (2009) found that strong organizational leadership responses mitigate identity threats created by player transgressions. However, there was a major gap concerning how leaders of sport organizations could redefine in-group boundaries (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996), content (Slater et al., 2019), and leader prototypicality (Hogg et al., 2012) to provide compelling sources of identity for consumers. Thus, a key contribution of our framework is to demonstrate that sport organizations need to play an active role in [re]defining the in-group and communicating what it stands for to current and potential members in response to contextual changes.

In this paper, we have concentrated on the process of identity leadership to galvanize existing and potential members during crises (Drury et al., 2019). Unabashedly, this approach was driven by our observations of COVID-19's impacts on the sport industry and the need for a framework that made sense of how organizations might contribute to areas of community need and well-being. However, we would argue that while discussed in the context of crises, our contribution is relevant to a variety of social and contextual changes faced by sport organizations. This might include, for example, the need to diversify a supporter base (e.g., Heere & James, 2007), react to organizational criticisms concerning an issue (e.g., player or employee transgressions), or revive the identity of an organization after a significant failure (e.g., the Union Cycliste Internationale following revelations about its handling of Lance Armstrong's doping). In each of these scenarios, leaders can redefine in-group boundaries and content to provide meaningful identity resources to those that identify. In turn, such identity leadership can render sport organizations as sources of well-being.

The Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework presents the SPRInT pathways, which consist of five types of psychological resources (i.e., social support, purpose and meaning, relatedness, in-group norms, trust) that people may attain by identifying with sport organizations. Scholars more or less acknowledged the roles of these resources in linking identification with sport organizations and well-being outcomes (Inoue, Funk, et al., 2015; Wann, 2006; Wann et al., 2017). However, our illustration of the SPRInT pathways expands the theoretical underpinnings of prior work by synthesizing the conceptual

arguments and empirical evidence that were separately presented in relation to each resource, and by integrating this work with the SIA to health and well-being (C. Haslam et al., 2018; Jetten et al., 2017). Notably, the central advantage of the SIA is its ability to reveal factors that influence the psychosocial states and behaviors among a *group* of people collectively, which is useful for understanding why certain groups or communities enjoy better well-being than others (C. Haslam et al., 2018). Therefore, in addition to delineating the specific social psychological processes underlying the relationships between organizational identification and well-being, our application of the SIA to health and well-being contributes to an understanding of how sport organizations may implement group- or community-level strategies for fostering population well-being (Edwards, 2015).

While our framework is developed in the context of sport organizations, it builds on and extends the fundamental tenets of the SIA—a theoretical perspective that has been applied to a range of consumer and organizational contexts (Bhattacharya et al., 1995; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Chiang et al., 2017). The propositions specified in this framework can serve as a basis for future work that seeks to understand how non-sport organizations, especially those in the broader leisure sector (e.g., events, tourism, entertainment, hospitality) that face similar challenges as sport organizations, may respond to crises and contribute to relief efforts.

5.2. Managerial implications

5.2.1. Roles of identity leadership in crisis response. The key component of identity leadership is an ability to lead others to act in the name of the group and foster a sense of "us" as a key resource (van Dick et al., 2018). From this perspective, leaders can motivate others to the extent that they develop a better understanding of the way that the group and its members construct the boundaries of "us" and "them" (S. A. Haslam et al., 2020; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996). During crises, redefining the inclusiveness of in-group boundaries is crucial, as the number of individuals in a group is correlated with the amount of resources available to members (Drury et al., 2019). Therefore, where a sport organization's priorities change in response to a crisis, leaders' communications should be clear and distributed through

appropriate channels to contact existing and potential members that are included in contextually redefined in-group boundaries (Proposition 1).

In determining who is included in redefined in-group boundaries, leaders might consider creating abstract groups (cf. Turner et al., 1987) premised on, for example, geography or league. This extends arguments presented by Lock and Funk (2016) about the power of multiple in-groups, and by Heere and James (2007) in relation to engaging with external communities. Geographically, sport organizations within the same area or city can temporarily redefine in-group boundaries to include other entities (e.g., Manchester United FC and Manchester City FC) so that they can collectively have greater resource and scope to impact recovery and well-being in focal communities. The same point would apply to leagues, whereby league leaders may work to drive collaboration around regional or national issues created by crises. In this way, collaboration to redefine group boundaries in order to create more inclusive in-group identities based on shared geography or league membership coalesces organizations around a common purpose of crisis relief.

If organizations work to achieve new priorities in relation to a crisis (i.e., local recovery from the crisis), leaders need to communicate identity content that accords with the contextual shifts arising from the situation (Proposition 2). The content, or what the group seeks to do in response to the crisis (Livingstone & Haslam, 2008), consists of information that engages both current and potential members in the in-group identity. As we discussed in Section 4.4, articulating shared identity content would be particularly complex when crises cause dissensus among people sport organizations intend to influence. When there is a high level of dissensus, sport organizations might choose not to meaningfully contribute to a recovery effort for fear that their response may alienate groups of members who oppose the response. Acknowledging that such situations could be quite fractious, we suggest that leaders engage with primary stakeholders (e.g., employees, players, corporate partners, customers; Chelladurai, 2014) to form a clear and shared value position (i.e., what "we" feel is important to "us") from which they can bring together those stakeholders as well as other current and potential members who share the position.

For example, consider Nike's 2018 advertising campaign that featured Colin Kaepernick, a former National Football League (NFL) quarterback who became the face of the Black Lives Matter movement and social justice protests. The campaign, defined by its slogan "Believe in something, Even if it means sacrificing everything," led to some negative consumer reactions and calls to boycott the company (Kim et al., 2020). It, however, also received support from primary stakeholders, including athletes endorsing the brand (e.g., Serena Williams, Chris Paul), corporate partners (e.g., NFL), and core customers who contributed to a 31% increase in sales within days of the release of the advertisement (Arnold, 2018; The Guardian, 2018). As this example suggests, sport organizations that develop a clear value position toward a crisis or issue will, by virtue of dissensus, be more attractive to some individuals than others. When their value position captures the needs and interests of primary stakeholders as in the case of Nike, communicating the position provides organizations with the opportunity to contrast with out-groups that deny or hold opposing views and hence enhance in-group distinctiveness—a key process in the relationship between shared identity and well-being (Jetten et al., 1997).

According to our framework, sport organizations seeking to produce well-being outcomes should be directed by a prototypical leader who can galvanize support among members (Proposition 3). Leader prototypicality is a powerful concept because it presumes that individuals who best represent in-group interests will gain status (S. A. Haslam et al., 2020). However, this also presents issues that individuals with certain characteristics (e.g., men) may be more likely to embody the shared response of a sport organization because it is a stereotypically masculinized environment (Hindman & Walker, 2020). However, there is also evidence that organizations that value diversity can embrace this as a feature of shared identity (Rink & Ellemers, 2007), thus indicating that where prototypicality reflects inequalities within a sport organization, the root cause may be social and/or structural, rather than in the deployment of identity leadership.

Acknowledging this point, and encouraging sport organizations to think inclusively about leaders, crises may create profound contextual changes that render typical leaders less

qualified. For example, COVID-19 led to many sporting organizations ceasing delivery or competition. Central to our framework, then, is an assumption that typical organizational leaders *may* or *may not* be qualified to exemplify the *shared interests of individuals included within in-group boundaries in relation to the planned crisis response*. As such, a lack of prototypical leadership in the response to crises will diminish trust and inhibit the realization of well-being outcomes through the SPRInT pathways. We would urge organizational leaders to think pragmatically about this point. Where leaders lack the requisite knowledge and expertise (Swanson & Kent, 2014), there are two courses of action: (a) to empower in-group members with relevant expertise or experience to lead crisis response (e.g., Marcus Rashford leading efforts to tackle hunger during COVID-19); or (b) to recruit an external expert who can act as a contextual leader to explain the organization's response to the crisis, or support existing leaders in the construction of messaging. Such a shift acknowledges that in-group members' perceptions of the most prototypical leader are determined in relation to social context and may change as the situation updates or evolves (Hogg, 2001).

     5.2.2. Cultivating the SPRInT pathways to facilitate crisis relief. For sport organizations seeking to contribute to crisis relief, it is essential that they design and implement relief activities to cultivate the SPRInT pathways to optimize the well-being benefits of organizational identification. Specifically, the awareness that others self-categorize with the same sport organization increases the (perceived) availability of social support (Proposition 4; Inoue, Wann, et al., 2020; Levine et al., 2005), gives purpose and meaning (Proposition 5; Filo et al., 2009; Wann et al., 2017), engenders the perceptions of relatedness (Proposition 6; Walseth, 2006; Wann, 2006), and promotes a sense of trust (Proposition 8; Inoue, Funk, et al., 2015; Zhou & Kaplanidou, 2018). In non-crisis times, members of a sport organization would enjoy ample opportunities to reinforce their awareness of shared group membership through participation in the organization's events and programs. During crises, however, temporary absence of normal service delivery may prevent members from engaging in group-based interactions with other members. Therefore, to help people recognize that their organizational identification is shared even in times of crisis, sport

organizations should facilitate in-group member interactions to render the identity salient, either in-person or virtually. From a communications perspective, this might include sharing member stories to reinforce similarities between members, or creating mechanisms through which members can connect with one another. An example of the latter might be a local sport club facilitating online "coffee mornings," using video conferencing software, to bring members together virtually. Crucially, here, the role of the sport organization is one of facilitation, acting as the focal point around which members can coalesce and creating opportunities for interpersonal interaction.

Sport organizations may also promote in-group norms that contribute to broader relief efforts by leading crisis response actions and programs that model desirable behaviors (Proposition 7). For example, sport organizations might look to use coaches or athletes in videos promoting desirable behaviors such as handwashing or might encourage their leaders to openly discuss mental health challenges they have faced during crises. In contrast, there are several examples, from the COVID-19 pandemic, of sport organizations and their leaders and visible members (e.g., coaches, players) acting purely out of self-interest or engaging in irresponsible behaviors (e.g., non-compliance with government guidance for social distancing; BBC Sport, 2020a). When other in-group members observe these behaviors, most of them are likely to find the organization's identity content unattractive and reduce their organizational identification (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Even worse, because of in-group favoritism, highly identified members may accept such irresponsible behaviors as the organization's in-group norms, choosing to perform those behaviors that are detrimental to public welfare (Reicher & Haslam, 2019). Consequently, if sport organizations are to promote and reinforce positive in-group norms that contribute to population well-being, it is important to ensure that their personnel (especially those visible to the public) act in a manner consistent with crisis relief efforts. In addition, where this does not occur, sport organizations need to act swiftly to acknowledge the transgression and communicate the sanction imposed, ensuring that this is consistent with the identity content communicated. Crucial in this regard is the need for transparency in the actions and communications of sport organizations.

Relatedly, a danger lies in assuming that leaders are always motivated to use their ability to mobilize the SPRInT pathways for advancing the broad interests of their groups and society. Contrary to this assumption, there is evidence to suggest that individuals' motivation to engage with leadership theories can stem from their "personal concern for the self" (Steffens & Haslam, 2020, p. 12), rather than from their concern for the greater social good. For example, leaders with a high concern for self-promotion may use identity leadership to promote social norms that can advance their political positions (Reicher & Haslam, 2017), or to support only privileged members meeting exclusive membership criteria (Reicher & Haslam, 2019). We urge sport organizations and their personnel to (a) consider the possibility that a leader may seek to activate the SPRInT pathways for his or her self-promotion, and (b) create mechanisms that can monitor and control for a leader's potential abuse of power.

5.3. Policy implications

Due to their diverse appeal and resultant ability to bridge different social groups (Heere & James, 2007; Schulenkorf, 2010), sport organizations are uniquely placed in their capacity to foster identification at a wider level during a crisis—something that may be impossible for groups or organizations with more homogenous in-group memberships. As such, a major policy implication is recognition that governmental efforts to facilitate recovery from a crisis will be more effective if sport organizations and their members are empowered to act on the community's behalf. One such example is the community spirit and sense of shared identity surrounding the city of Boston and its residents in the aftermath of the marathon bombing in April 2013. Residents of Boston united with supporters across the country and around the world under the slogan "Boston Strong," and One Fund was established by the city's leaders as a centralized fundraising tool to support those affected by the crisis (Finch, 2016). Local sport organizations, such as the Boston Red Sox and Boston Celtics, and their members (e.g., players, fans) played a major role in this collective initiative by contributing to the fundraising efforts and implementing community outreach programs under the Boston Strong slogan (Finch, 2016).

Furthermore, the sense of shared identity is central to adherence to governmental

guidelines and policies, whereby the core mind-set is to not consider the policy implications for individuals (the "I"), but recognize the broader implications for the community (the "We") (Drury et al., 2019). When guidelines and policies are accepted as in-group norms, members are likely to show commitment (Drury et al., 2019). It is crucial to recognize our capacity to act and behave as group members, who with the right leadership, are capable of behaving for the greater societal good (Reicher & Drury, 2020). Thus, policymakers are encouraged to work together with local sport organizations to integrate adherence to government guidance into the organizations' in-group norms, while helping organizations to redefine their boundaries to encompass more residents as in-group members. At that stage, sport organizations will be better placed to implement community-level strategies for fostering population well-being (Edwards, 2015).

6. Directions for Future Research and Conclusions

The Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework provides several new opportunities for future research. First, one challenge sport organizations may face in redefining the inclusiveness of their in-group is to set in-group boundaries that are not too inclusive to serve as a meaningful source of social identity for their current and potential members (Brewer, 1991). Therefore, future research could be conducted with members of sport organizations that temporarily redefined in-group boundaries during a crisis to understand how they view the optimal inclusiveness of their group in the face of a crisis.

Second, in relation to the articulation of identity content, researchers may analyze leadership statements published by sport organizations after a crisis to provide insights into how leaders construct their messages to accentuate newly shared goals or needs for in-group members in response to the crisis (see Reicher & Hopkins, 1996, for an example of such content analysis).

Third, a survey could be conducted with leaders of several sport organizations affected by a crisis to assess their perceptions of the organizations' resilience levels (Wicker et al., 2013) in relation to the crisis, as well as the extent to which they used identity leadership to support members' well-being. This could be followed by a separate survey

administered to members (e.g., participants, spectators) of the same organizations to measure their organizational identification and well-being. Analysis of data from these surveys would expand an understanding of the framework's boundary conditions by revealing how organizational resilience, as a contextual factor, may affect the adoption of identity leadership as well as its effects on organizational identification and member well-being.

Fourth, the SPRInT pathways have strong theoretical support. However, the effects of the five mediators have yet to be simultaneously tested in a single study and require future empirical investigation. For example, initial correlational studies may be conducted to assess and compare the relative strength of the effects of the five mediators in establishing the relationship between organizational identification and well-being. A further extension of such studies is to design and implement a series of experiments examining how the effects of each mediator would change by experimental conditions designed to induce varying levels of consensus/dissensus (Stallings, 1973) about a crisis response adopted by organizations.

Fifth, it would be worth exploring the broader political contexts in which sport organizations operate and the influence that differences in such contexts may have on the organizations' responses to a crisis or issue. That is, while our propositions are developed in the contexts of Western nations where individuals and organizations reserve the rights to express their positions on almost every issue or situation, sport organizations operating in other national contexts may be required to adapt their crisis responses to the constraints imposed by their countries' political systems. For example, sport organizations operating in countries with one-party systems may be constrained to follow the party line on certain crises or issues.

In conclusion, the Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework is our proposed starting place to help sport organizations embrace the power of groups and identities to enhance population well-being during crises. We hope that the theoretical propositions and practical examples presented in the current work, as well as future research that will augment our theorizing, will enable sport organizations to advance their role in contributing to crisis response and recovery efforts.

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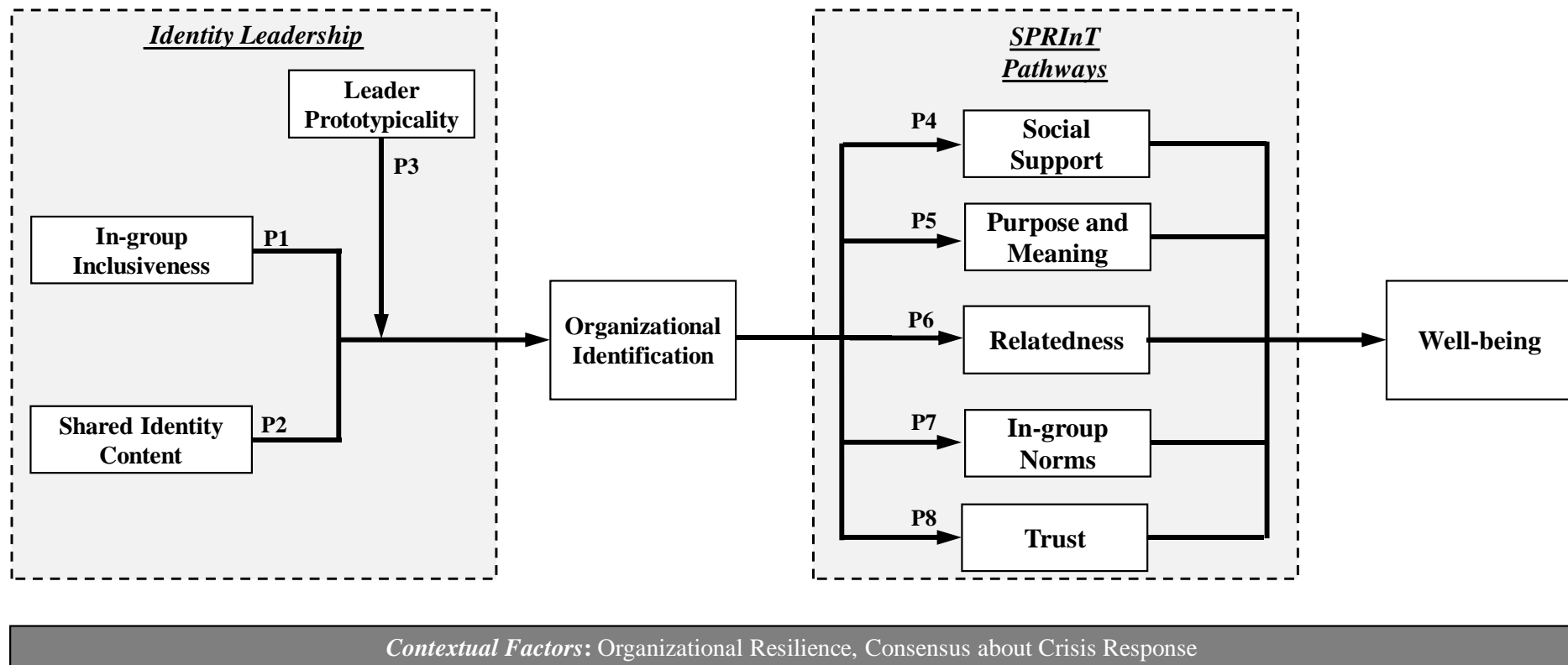   https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2017.11.001

Figure 1. The Organizational Identification and Well-being Framework. P = Proposition.