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Resilience in Teams and Organizations

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Resilience in Teams and Organizations

Over the past couple of decades, our understanding of the pressures faced by those involved in sport has expanded rapidly, with a growing realization that sources of strain in sport are prevalent and pervasive and can originate from a variety of sources (see, e.g., Arnold & Fletcher, 2012; Gould, Jackson, & Finch, 1993; Mellalieu, Neil, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2009; Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1991; Thelwell, Weston, & Greenlees, 2007). These stressors may be associated with an athlete’s competitive performance, organizational environment, or personal “non-sporting” life events (Fletcher, Hanton, & Mellalieu, 2006; see also Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). In addition to the growing understanding of these demands it is common for researchers as well as coaches, performance directors, and sports organizations to delineate between athletes, teams, and most recently organizations who thrive under pressure and achieve peak performance and wellbeing and those who yield to pressure and underperform or whose wellbeing suffers at the expense of their success. These differences are often attributed to the concept of resilience with some researchers indicating that resilience is a pre-requisite for sporting success (Holt & Dunn, 2004; Mills, Butt, Maynard, & Harwood, 2012; Van Yperen, 2009).

Resilience is best understood when it is considered in a context-specific domain (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000) and it follows that one should not assume that models of resilience will necessarily be transferable to other domains within or outwith the sport context. Thankfully, a body of work has recently emerged exploring resilience specifically in athletes (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Galli & Vealey, 2008; Machida, Irwin, & Feltz, 2013; Martin-Krumm, Sarrazin, Peterson, & Famose, 2003; Mummery, Schofield, & Perry, 2004; Schinke & Jerome, 2002; Seligman, Nolen-Hoeksema,

1 Thornton, & Thornton, 1990), teams (Morgan, Fletcher, & Sarkar, 2013, 2015, 2019),
2 and organizations. Several reviews of this emerging literature exist (e.g., Fasey, 2017;
3 Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Galli & Gonzalez, 2015; Linnenluecke, 2017; Morgan,
4 Fletcher, & Sarkar, 2017; Wagstaff, Sarkar, Davidson, & Fletcher, 2017). For instance,
5 Fletcher and Sarkar (2013) provided a review and critique the various definitions,
6 concepts and theories of psychological resilience. Galli and Gonzalez (2015) critically
7 reviewed recent conceptual developments in psychological resilience research in sport
8 and highlighted potential areas of future research. More recently, Wagstaff et al. (2017)
9 highlighted the salience, but relative dearth, of systematic examination of the influence
10 of sociocultural factors and context in understanding resilience (cf. Galli & Vealey,
11 2008; Machida et al., 2013). Taking the last of these reviews and its central observation
12 – the importance but limited presence of sociocultural perspectives on resilience – is
13 somewhat surprising given the growing recognition of the value of such perspectives in
14 non-sport resilience literature (cf. Ungar, 2012). To elaborate, Ungar (2012), argued
15 both “culture and context shape the environment in which processes associated with
16 resilience occur, making some processes more crucial to adaptation and growth than
17 others” (p. 387). Indeed, Wagstaff et al., concurred with this perspective adding,
18 “sociocultural factors and organizational contexts hold significant implications for the
19 definition and development of resilience” (p. 121). In this chapter, we critically review
20 the concept resilience in sport, with a specific emphasis on the sociocultural influences
21 on and the organizational dynamics surrounding resilience. Before considering the
22 emerging team and organizational resilience work, we provide a background to
23 conceptualization of psychological resilience and early research examining this
24 construct in sport.

1 **Defining Psychological Resilience**

2 Researchers across various domains of psychology have provided numerous
3 definitions which vary significantly depending on the context of investigation and
4 application, and the conceptualization of resilience as a trait or process (see, for a
5 review, Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Despite resilience being conceived in different ways,
6 researchers generally agree that for this construct to be demonstrated both adversity and
7 positive adaptation must be evident (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). In an attempt to draw on
8 the extant consistencies within the conceptual literature, Fletcher and Sarkar defined
9 *psychological* resilience as, “the role of mental processes and behavior in promoting
10 personal assets and protecting an individual from the potential negative effect of
11 stressors” (2012, p. 675; 2013, p. 16). The authors proposed this definition extended
12 previous conceptual work in the area by offering a specific focus on psychological
13 resilience, encapsulating aspects of both trait and process conceptualizations, an
14 emphasis on the neutral term “stressor” rather than the negative term “adversity”, and a
15 focus on promoting personal assets and protecting an individual from the potential
16 negative effect of stressors rather than positive adaptation *per se*.

17 Despite the definitional advances noted above, Wagstaff et al. (2017) noted
18 several additional conceptual considerations regarding the development of
19 socioculturally and contextually sensitive perspectives on resilience. First, the
20 assumption that resilience is a virtue across all contexts leads well-intentioned theory,
21 research, and praxis astray and is germane for resilience to become a vice instead of a
22 virtue in some circumstances. That is, the decontextualization of resilience as a stand-
23 alone virtue by researchers who characterize it as an individual trait, leave the concept
24 open to misunderstanding and misapplication. A second consideration in the context of

1 definition resilience relate to the limited acknowledgment of sociological and cultural
2 utility (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013) in many extant definitions and conceptualizations of
3 resilience. That is, although psychological resilience is, by definition, centrally focused
4 on intra-individual processes, greater consideration and sensitivity to sociocultural and
5 organizational influences is required to gain a more complete understanding of the
6 phenomenon (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Third, some
7 researchers have problemized the use of the term “resilience” noting that the inherent
8 and perpetual pursuit of resilient soldiers (see McGarry, Walklate, & Mythen, 2015)
9 casts a dark shadow of hegemonic masculinity, gender-role conflicts, and stigma,
10 resulting in demobilization and reintegration problems for some military veterans.

11 **Psychological Resilience Research in Sport**

12 Early studies examining resilience in sport performers largely centered on the
13 role of resilience as a dependent variable in the stress-injury relationship or individual’s
14 explanatory style. For instance, Smith, Smoll, and Ptacek (1990) examined the ways in
15 which moderator variables interact with one another to increase vulnerability or
16 resilience in the life stress-athletic injury relationship. Smith et al. interpreted their data
17 to indicate that social support and psychological coping skills were statistically
18 independent psychosocial resources and operated in a conjunctive manner to influence
19 the relationship between life stress and subsequent athletic injury in adolescents.
20 Adopting an explanatory style perspective on resilience, Seligman et al. (1990) found
21 university swimmers with an optimistic explanatory style to swim faster in subsequent
22 trials following false negative performance feedback compared to their own original
23 time. This work was later extended by Martin-Krumm et al. (2003) who manipulated
24 the beliefs of high school students by telling them that they had not performed as well in

1 a basketball task in comparison to others. In findings that were similar to those of
2 Seligman et al. (1990), participants with an optimistic explanatory style performed
3 better on the second trial than comparable participants with a pessimistic outlook. In
4 Martin-Krumm et al.'s study, the relationship between explanatory style and
5 participants' dribbling performance after perceived failure was also affected by their
6 anxiety levels and success expectations. Here, an optimistic explanatory style correlated
7 with expectations of successful performance prior to the second trial and lower state
8 anxiety which, in turn, were also linked to improved performance in the dribbling task.

9 Mummery et al. (2004) sought to improve the ecological validity of the then
10 nascent findings by exploring resilience in swimmers who were competing in a real
11 national competition. Swimmers were classified as resilient if they were able to improve
12 their qualifying time after initially failing to do so during an earlier round. The results
13 showed that athletes classified as resilient had higher perceptions of physical endurance,
14 indicating a more optimistic outlook. Interestingly, the results also demonstrated that
15 these swimmers had lower levels of social support than those who did not perform well
16 following initial failure. The authors explained these results by stating that the
17 swimmers who displayed resilience may have been able to act in a more independent
18 manner in unfamiliar surroundings than their non-resilient counterparts. In particular,
19 placing less emphasis on requiring social support to achieve sporting success. Yet, it is
20 important to note that the swimmers may not have perceived the inability to match their
21 qualifying time as a stressor. This is because it is common practice for swimmers to
22 limit their performance in earlier heats to preserve energy for later, more challenging,
23 races where optimum performance is required. Based on these studies, Schinke and
24 colleagues (e.g., Schinke & Jerome, 2002; Schinke, Petersen, & Couture, 2004) created

1 the first sport resiliency training program primarily focused on developing optimism
2 skills and were deemed relatively successful by the authors in enhancing resilience in
3 athletes and teams. Despite these positive outcomes, it is important to note that there are
4 several limitations allied with the early interventions and the research on which it was
5 based. For example, by focusing solely on optimism and its role in enabling athletes to
6 overcome setbacks, these interventions elided other factors which play a role in athletes'
7 resilience (see Galli & Gonzalez, 2015; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). In addition, the
8 studies also exclusively explored the role of explanatory style in overcoming the
9 stressor of failure. This approach restricts our practical understanding of how applicable
10 an optimistic style is to athletes encountering other demands such as organizational
11 stressors (Hanton, Wagstaff, & Fletcher., 2012). In addition, the research reviewed in
12 this section generally establishes resilience based on the criteria of winning or increased
13 performance such as swimming faster. From a sociocultural perspective, such criteria
14 have limitations since they do not acknowledge the individual goals of the performer or
15 characterize what success is for stakeholders, teams or organizations (cf. Ungar, 2008).
16 Finally, by focusing on resilience from a trait perspective, the early studies reviewed in
17 this section failed to capture the person-environment interactions characteristic of
18 contemporary conceptualizations of resilience as a dynamic process (Fletcher & Sarkar,
19 2013; Windle, 2011).

20 The literature outlined above provided an important foundation for the work
21 conducted over the last decade, during which time researchers have adopted a more
22 holistic approach to the conceptualization of resilience and incorporated the use of
23 qualitative designs. The first study to investigate resilience in this way was by Galli and
24 Vealey (2008) who explored athletes' perceptions of resilience in relation to the most

1 difficult adversity they had encountered. The authors' used their findings to propose a
2 framework highlighting that, following adversity, athletes experienced agitation (e.g.,
3 the use of a variety of coping strategies). In turn, this process resulted in positive
4 outcomes including increased learning, motivation, and perspective. Further, the authors
5 also remarked that these positive outcomes were in part a result of pre-existing
6 sociocultural influences and personal resources. In an attempt to build on Galli and
7 Vealey's (2008) work, several groups of researchers (e.g., Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012;
8 White & Bennie, 2015) have employed inductive qualitative designs to explore
9 resilience in sport. For example, Fletcher and Sarkar (2012) developed a grounded
10 theory of psychological resilience in Olympic champions. Their findings revealed that
11 numerous psychological factors (relating to a positive personality, motivation,
12 confidence, focus, and perceived social support) protected the world's best athletes from
13 the potential negative effect of stressors by influencing their challenge appraisal and
14 meta-cognitions. These constructive cognitive reactions promoted facilitative responses
15 that led to the realization of optimal sport performance. In another qualitative study, to
16 clarify how sport might cultivate resilience, White and Bennie (2015) explored gymnast
17 and coach perceptions about the development of resilience through gymnastics
18 participation. Data analysis revealed that aspects of the gymnastics environment created
19 stress and exposed gymnasts to many challenges in training and competition. Further,
20 features of the sport environment, such as interpersonal relationships and positive coach
21 behaviors, supported gymnasts through these challenges and encouraged them to
22 overcome failure, and gymnastics participation was perceived to develop resilience, life
23 skills, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. In addition to these exploratory studies,
24 researchers have recently turned their attention to psychometric issues and the use of

1 questionnaires to examine resilience or moderate its relationship with dependent
2 variables (e.g., Gucciardi, Jackson, Coulter, & Mallett; 2011; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2013)
3 and considered the predictive role of resilience on well-being (see, e.g., Lu et al., 2016;
4 Vitali, Bortololi, Bertinato, Robazza, & Schena, 2015).

5 **Social and Organizational Influences on Resilience**

6 As alluded to earlier in this chapter, research examining resilience has been
7 critiqued for being too focused on individual capacities (see Ungar et al., 2008).
8 Although some scholars have pointed to the potential salience of sociocultural factors
9 (e.g., Galli & Vealey, 2008), most of the resilience research conducted in sport has
10 focused on athletes' *psychological* processes hitherto eliding the sociocultural context
11 within which this process occurs (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). It follows that research
12 which aims to address this omission is essential to the development of effective
13 resilience interventions. The argument for such research endeavors is further supported
14 by the identification of social and cultural factors that influence resilience in non-sport
15 domains (see, e.g., Clauss-Ehlers, 2008) and an emerging recognition of social and
16 cultural influences that exist within sport (see, e.g., Blodgett, Schinke, McGannon, &
17 Fisher, 2014; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009; Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018). Indeed,
18 Blodgett et al. recently took stock of the growing body of conceptual research aligned
19 with the cultural sport psychology (CSP; see Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009) and
20 organizational sport psychology (OSP; Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009; Wagstaff, 2017;
21 2019a; 2019b) agendas. Indeed, cultural praxis is central to CSP and OSP as a means of
22 overcoming the 'taken for granted' way of 'doing' sport psychology steeped in a post-
23 positivist, white, Euro-American, male, performance-based discourse, and is pivotal for
24 the future advancement of a socioculturally and contextually sensitive approach to the

1 study and development of resilience.

2 Cultural praxis in sport psychology grew out of early writings that drew on
3 cultural studies that highlighted how issues of power and privilege were being
4 perpetuated in and through the practices of the domain. Through cultural praxis,
5 researchers and practitioners strive to consider their own, as well as others', cultural
6 identities. The intent is to draw attention to issues of sociocultural difference, power,
7 ethics, and politics, which are often concealed, and facilitate a more contextualized
8 understanding of marginalized identities and a plurality of differences (e.g., race,
9 ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, physicality, nationality). For example,
10 athletes originate from a diverse range of family backgrounds with varying cultural and
11 religious beliefs, factors which have been found to influence the resilience process (cf.
12 Clauss-Ehlers, 2008). Athletes also operate within organizational environments that
13 have similar, yet idiosyncratic, economic, political, and sociocultural characteristics
14 (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009). In light of these influences, it would appear that “off-the-
15 shelf” resilience interventions are unlikely to be effective across all athletes, teams, and
16 sport organizations, and there is a need to better incorporate lessons from sociocultural
17 and organizational dynamics research.

18 Within the general psychology literature, Ungar and colleagues (Ungar, 2008;
19 Ungar et al., 2008; Ungar, 2010; Theron et al., 2011) have written widely about the
20 need for a more culturally and contextually embedded understanding of resilience. In
21 doing so, these authors have used the tenets of ecological theory to draw from research
22 and clinical experience with children, youth, and families to argue that resilience is not a
23 phenomenon solely related to the individual, but also exists as a facet of one's social
24 and political setting, thus being *negotiated* by individuals and their community. For

1 other scholars (e.g., Gilligan, 2004; Seccombe, 2002), an approach to resilience
2 development wherein ‘changing the odds’ is preferable to resourcing individuals to
3 ‘beating the odds’. To illustrate, in his manual for child and youth care workers,
4 Gilligan (2004) argued that “resilience... is now more usefully considered as a variable
5 quality that derives from a process of repeated interactions between a person and
6 favorable features of the surrounding context in a person’s life” (p. 94). Hence, and in
7 line with a more culturally and contextually embedded view of resilience, “the degree of
8 resilience displayed by a person in a certain context may be said to be related to the
9 extent to which that context has elements that nurture this resilience” (p. 94).

10 Ungar (2012) highlighted the influence of three main sociocultural influences
11 relevant for resilience. The first centers on the observation that facilitative environments
12 can be more powerful than individual-level variables in the resilience process (see
13 Ungar, 2012). To illustrate, Chauhan, Reppucci, Burnette, and Reine (2010) found that,
14 when matching for individual factors such as delinquency and psychological risk
15 factors, the recidivism rates amongst girls were shown to be correlated with
16 sociocultural factors and racial background. In the context of sport, Galli and Vealey
17 (2008) noted that the majority of African American athletes in their study believed that
18 the notion of success and overcoming challenges was a central part of their culture and a
19 key influence on their ability to deal with the adverse events they encountered. In
20 practical terms, these studies underline the need for researchers to not only focus
21 interventions on athletes’ personal qualities, but also to utilize aspects of their
22 sociocultural environment to facilitate the development of resilience.

23 Ungar’s (2012) second observation concerns the access to, and the
24 meaningfulness of, the findings from non-diverse samples. Policymakers in sport need

1 to develop organizations and services that facilitate the development of resilience whilst
2 being considerate of different contexts and cultures. Beyond sport, resilience researchers
3 in general psychology have acknowledged that minority groups (Ungar, 2008) and
4 disadvantaged individuals (Hutcheon & Lashewicz, 2014) are frequently not included in
5 discussions when designing services to aid their resilience. Accordingly, the
6 aforementioned researchers recognized that interventions that target these populations
7 are often not specific to their backgrounds or properly suited to their specific needs.
8 This omission can have dramatic (negative) effects, as highlighted by Hansson and
9 colleagues (Hansson, Tuck, Lurie, & McKenzie, 2012), who found that adult
10 immigrants who assimilate into a culture and lack specific cultural support report more
11 mental health issues than those who do not. Hence, and given the global nature of
12 contemporary sport, it is vital that practitioners work with athletes to ensure that
13 resources are tailored to the specific sociocultural context in which they originate or
14 identify with. Only then are resilience interventions likely to be both effective and
15 efficacious.

16 The last observation made by Ungar (2012) was that individuals' benefit more
17 from protective factors developed to alleviate risks when the level of exposure to the
18 risk is at its greatest. Indeed, it is generally accepted that individuals with the greatest
19 perceived needs benefit from unique individual provision rather than general resilience
20 programs designed for wider populations and situations (cf. Robertson, Cooper, Sarkar,
21 & Curran, 2015). In addition, the support required can be disproportionately larger for
22 an athlete facing substantial demands. Away from sport, education studies have shown
23 smaller class sizes and a caring teacher are more advantageous to pupils with the most
24 complex educational needs and disrupted home lives (Shernoff & Schmidt, 2008).

1 Despite the different domains, the overall picture is that a homogenous approach to
2 developing resilience is not appropriate and it is possible that athletes who are most at
3 risk will benefit the most from resilience intervention resources.

4 **Team Resilience in Sport**

5 Resilience researchers, in various domains of psychology, have recently devoted
6 attention to the group level (e.g., Carmeli, Friedman, & Tishler, 2013; Stephens,
7 Heaphy, Carmeli, Spreitzer, & Dutton, 2013). Within the sport psychology literature,
8 Morgan, Fletcher, and Sarkar (2013) conducted the first study of team resilience in
9 sport. Employing focus groups with members of five elite sport teams, a definition of
10 team resilience was developed and the resilient characteristics of elite sport teams were
11 identified. Specifically, team resilience was defined as a “dynamic, psychosocial
12 process which protects a group of individuals from the potential negative effect of the
13 stressors they collectively encounter. It comprises of processes whereby team members
14 use their individual and collective resources to positively adapt when experiencing
15 adversity” (p. 552). Team resilience was described as a dynamic phenomenon with
16 participants stating that was “dependent upon what time of the season it is” or “whether
17 there is an injury in the team”. In terms of its protective function, the participants
18 described team resilience as akin to “having a barrier around you” and “having a thick
19 skin”. Furthermore, the participants emphasized that team resilience involved a shared
20 experience of stressors (e.g., team disruptions, low team morale) and this was revealed
21 through comments such as “we have been through so many setbacks together”. Four
22 resilient characteristics of elite sport teams emerged from this study: group structure
23 (i.e., conventions that shape group norms and values), mastery approaches (i.e., shared
24 attitudes and behaviors that promote an emphasis on team improvement), social capital

1 (i.e., the existence of high quality interactions and caring relationships within the team),
2 and collective efficacy (i.e., the team's shared beliefs in its ability to perform a task).

3 The recent developments in resilience research have advanced psychologists'
4 knowledge of the nature, meaning, and scope of team resilience. In the sport psychology
5 literature, Morgan et al.'s (2013) study provided greater definitional clarity on resilience
6 at the team level (i.e., what team resilience is) and a framework to profile the resilient
7 characteristics of elite sport teams (i.e., what resilient teams 'look' like). Although such
8 knowledge provided descriptive information about the factors that enable teams to
9 withstand stressors, these characteristics do not explain how resilient teams function.
10 Morgan et al. described team resilience as a "dynamic, psychosocial process" (p. 552)
11 which points to operational aspects of this construct and how it changes over time. They
12 went on to argue that "due to the contextual and temporal nature of team resilience,
13 future studies should aim to identify the processes that underpin the resilience
14 characteristics" (p. 558). In an attempt to address this gap in our knowledge, Morgan,
15 Fletcher, and Sarkar (2015) subsequently explored the psychosocial processes
16 underpinning team resilience in elite sport. Using narrative inquiry, Morgan et al.
17 (2015) analyzed the autobiographies of eight members of the 2003 England rugby union
18 World Cup winning team. Findings revealed five main psychosocial processes
19 underpinning team resilience: transformational leadership, shared team leadership, team
20 learning, social identity, and positive emotions. The results indicated that these
21 processes enabled the England rugby team to effectively utilize their cognitive,
22 affective, and relational resources to act as leverage points for team resilience when
23 facing stressors. Further, the findings of this study revealed that team resilience was
24 illuminated through a progressive narrative form. This was portrayed by team members

1 evaluating stressors in a positive fashion and focusing on moving forward as a team
2 despite setbacks.

3 Research investigating team resilience in elite sport has begun to describe what
4 resilient teams ‘look like’ (i.e., their characteristics) and how they function (i.e., their
5 processes). However, less is known about the psychosocial enablers and cues that
6 stimulate such mechanisms and the associated pathways to team resilience (Morgan et
7 al., 2017; Wagstaff et al., 2017). In their discussion of future research directions,
8 Morgan et al. (2015) proposed that “creative qualitative approaches such as ethnography
9 offer intriguing possibilities to study ‘first-hand’ the underlying team resilience
10 mechanisms . . . and how they are developed (p. 76). Thus, through prolonged
11 fieldwork, Morgan, Fletcher, and Sarkar (2019) conducted a season-long (11 months)
12 ethnography to explore the psychosocial enablers and strategies that promote the
13 development of team resilience within a high-level sports team. The sample consisted of
14 a leading English national league-winning semi-professional rugby union team ($n = 27$)
15 participants. Multiple data collection methods were employed (i.e., observation,
16 interviewing, field notes, reflexive diary) as part of a holistic ethnographic approach. An
17 iterative process of content data analysis was employed to identify key themes. Findings
18 revealed five categories comprising multiple practical strategies, actions, and enablers
19 for team resilience development: Inspiring, motivating, and challenging team members
20 to achieve performance excellence; developing a team regulatory system based on
21 ownership and responsibility; cultivating a team identity and togetherness based on a
22 selfless culture; exposing the team to challenging training and unexpected/difficult
23 situations; and promoting enjoyment and keeping a positive outlook during stressors.
24 The findings of this study provide sport psychologists, coaches, and those working in

1 teams with multiple psychosocial enablers and strategies to develop team resilience.

2 Collectively, the emerging research exploring team resilience in sport has
3 contributed to our understanding of what team resilience is, highlighted some of the
4 processes by which resilient teams function, and identified evidence-based practical
5 strategies to improve team resilience. Nevertheless, there remains much to be explored
6 regarding the interplay of sociocultural and organizational dynamics and both individual
7 and team resilience. Indeed, some of the themes to emerge from Morgan et al.'s (2013)
8 study of team resilience (e.g., psychosocial conventions shaping group norms and roles,
9 managing change, and social capital) intersect with those highlighted in research on
10 organizational functioning in sport (cf. Wagstaff, Fletcher, & Hanton, 2012a).

11 **Organizational Resilience**

12 As alluded to earlier in this chapter, recent resilience research has shifted from
13 individuals toward the study of groups and teams (see, e.g., Alliger et al., 2015; Bennett,
14 Aden, Broome, Mitchell, & Rigdon, 2010; Meneghel, Salanova, & Martinez, in press;
15 Morgan et al., 2013; 2015; Stephens et al., 2013). Over the past couple of decades, the
16 concept of resilience has also been applied to organizations (e.g., Gittell, Cameron, Lim,
17 & Rivas, 2006; Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; McManus, Seville,
18 Vargo, & Brunsdon, 2008). This work has been shaped not only by the individual and
19 team resilience literature, but also with dominant influences from ecological and
20 engineering resilience, and from disaster management and business continuity research
21 (Annarelli & Nonino, 2016), where the focus is often on the resilience of a system,
22 rather than a single individual or team (van der Vegt, Essens, Wahlström, & George,
23 2015). Within this context, organizational resilience is seen as an emergent property of a
24 complex system with multiple interacting parts which includes the employees and teams

1 working within that organization.

2 Organizational resilience has been defined as, “the maintenance of positive
3 adjustment under challenging circumstances such that the organization emerges from
4 those conditions strengthened and more resourceful” (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007, p. 3418)
5 and “having the capacity to change before the case for change becomes desperately
6 obvious” (Hamel & Valikangas, 2003, p. 54). Nevertheless, definitions and
7 operationalizations of the concept remain quite fragmented (Tarba, Cooper, Ahammad,
8 Khan, & Rao-Nickolson, 2017), in part due to the heterogeneity of research streams
9 within this literature (Linnenluecke, 2017). Despite this fragmented and siloed work,
10 reviews of the organizational resilience literature have recently emerged (e.g., Annarelli
11 & Nonino, 2016; Fasey, 2017; Linnenluecke, 2017).

12 Linnenluecke’s (2017) review charts the historical development of
13 organizational resilience research streams, with the earliest work (e.g., Meyer, 1982)
14 considering organizational resilience as a response to external threats. This history is
15 intertwined with societal events, for instance, a number of industrial accidents in the
16 1980s including Chernobyl, Exxon Valdez, and the Space Shuttle Challenger prompted
17 an inward-facing focus on resilience as reliability (e.g., Weick & Roberts, 1993; Boin &
18 van Eaten, 2013). Additionally, organizational resilience work has also been linked to
19 key external threats (e.g. Gittell et al., 2006; McManus et al., 2008), prompted by
20 high(9/11 and the 2008-09 global financial crisis. Moreover, organizational resilience
21 research has increasingly been influenced by concerns regarding the generalizability of
22 the “reliability” research conducted in larger organizations to smaller businesses
23 (Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011). This research, influenced by the contemporaneous
24 development of management literature on business continuity and crisis management,

1 can be divided into three principle streams, namely those focusing on organizational
2 resilience as a function of employee strengths (e.g., Coutu, 2002; Lengnick-Hall et al.,
3 2011), organizational resilience as the adaptability of the wider system (e.g. Vogus &
4 Sutcliffe, 2007; Hamel & Valikangas, 2003), and organizational resilience in relation to
5 inter-organizational networks of supply chains (e.g., Sheffi & Rice, 2005).

6 Starting with the seminal research by Meyer (1982), whose empirical study
7 explored hospital responses to an unexpected doctors' strike, analyzing financial
8 records, occupancy figures and payrolls across 19 hospitals in addition to a more
9 intensive study of three hospitals with maximally disparate strategies. Meyer suggested
10 that organizational adaptations are divisible into three phases: anticipatory, responsive,
11 and readjustment, and that organizations display two different forms of adaptability,
12 either by absorbing the impact of events or undergoing change and learning. Predictors
13 of adaptation included entrepreneurial strategies and adaptive ideologies which enhance
14 learning, whereas formalized and complex structures were found to retard learning.

15 Following Meyer's seminal work, a second phase of research emerged, focusing
16 on minimizing internal threats by pursuing 'reliability' over efficiency was influenced
17 by the work conducted by a body of researchers at the University of California at
18 Berkeley studying organizations managing hazardous essential technical systems,
19 labelled 'high reliability organizations' (e.g. Roberts, 1989; Bourrier, 2011). Against
20 this backdrop, Weick and Roberts (1993) introduced the idea of the 'collective mind' for
21 high reliability, emphasizing the need for cooperation, ongoing interrelating and dense
22 interactions, and the importance of social processes, where individualism was subsumed
23 by the collective mind. The principles were later expanded in the book, 'Managing the
24 Unexpected', in which Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) promulgated five core principles:

1 monitor small failures; don't oversimplify; be sensitive to the messy reality of what is
2 happening; be committed to resilience; and defer to expertise.

3 A third phase of research outlined by Linnenluecke (2017) was dedicated to how
4 organizations of varying sizes cope and respond in conditions of great environmental
5 uncertainty, such as those experienced at the start of the 21st century. For some (e.g.,
6 Coutu, 2002; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011) the focus was on human resources as the most
7 important part of an organizational system, where employee characteristics were seen as
8 a critical source of resilience capacity, and relationship networks determine the
9 accessibility of these resources (van der Vegt et al., 2015). More recently, Lengnick-
10 Hall et al. (2011) proposed that an organization's capacity for resilience is developed
11 through strategically managing human resources to create competencies among core
12 employees, that when aggregated at the organizational level, make it possible for
13 organizations to achieve the ability to respond in a resilient manner when they
14 experience severe shocks. Specifically, their proposition is based on three elements:
15 *cognitive factors* (e.g., strong core values, sense of purpose, constructive sense-making),
16 *behavioral characteristics* (e.g., learned resourcefulness, bricolage, behavioral
17 preparedness), and *contextual conditions* (e.g., psychological safety, deep social capital,
18 diffused power and accountability).

19 Alongside the work on human resources, an alternative stream of research in
20 response to external threats considered organizational resilience as the adaptability of
21 business models (Linnenluecke, 2017). Influential work by a body of New Zealand
22 researchers has emanated from an early study by McManus et al. (2008), where
23 organizational resilience was characterized as consisting three main dimensions namely
24 *situation awareness* (viz. an organization's understanding and perception of its entire

1 operating environment), *management of keystone vulnerabilities* (viz. those aspects of
2 an organization, operational and managerial, that have the potential to have significant
3 negative impacts in a crisis situation), and *adaptive capacity* (viz. the culture and
4 dynamics of an organization that allow it to make decisions in a timely and appropriate
5 manner, both in day-to-day business and also in crises). A resilience benchmarking tool
6 was subsequently developed, divided into three main attribute categories of leadership
7 and culture, networks and relationships, and change readiness (Lee, Vargo, & Seville,
8 2013; Whitman, Kachali, Roger, Vargo, & Seville, 2013).

9 More recently, researchers have started to consider the processes which support
10 the development of organizational resilience. Burnard, Bhamra, and Tsinopoulos (2018)
11 used case study data from three energy sector organizations to propose four ways to
12 build resilience, depending on an organization's abilities for preparation (i.e., the degree
13 to which an organization has a systematic approach to risk management) and adaptation
14 (i.e., the degree to which an organization flexibly allocates resources). Burnard et al.
15 also highlighted the iterative decision-making processes in which events are initially
16 detected, with their likely impact is evaluated to determine whether to implement an
17 existing response or adjust and adopt a new response. This process-based approach is
18 consistent with the view that organizational resilience is not a 'one size fits all'
19 construct, and that organizations seeking to develop their resilience need to consider
20 strategies which are relevant to their orientations towards preparation and adaptation.

21 In addition to the work of Linnenluecke (2017) charting the development of
22 different research streams within the organizational resilience literature, a review by
23 Fasey (2017) provided a synthesis of empirical research concerning how resilience
24 functions within organizations. In doing so, the characteristics an organization *has*

1 which might predict or enable organizational resilience were grouped into *resources*
2 (viz. human, financial, physical, social, informational and intangible resources),
3 *capabilities* (namely the organization's capacity to deploy resources towards a desired
4 goal), *culture* (as shared values, beliefs, expectations and practices), and *structure*
5 (consisting of how employees and teams are grouped and how information is shared).
6 Relevant characteristics from each grouping are discussed, and areas of disagreement or
7 ambiguity highlighted. The underlying mechanisms through which organizational
8 resilience operates were found to comprise planning, adaptation, learning, relationship
9 networks, and leadership. Finally, key contextual variables were identified, including
10 the size of an organization and the sector in which it operates. Somewhat surprisingly,
11 the sport sector has been relatively slow to undertake research in this domain,
12 particularly given the volatile nature of sport, and the high levels of organizational
13 change (Wagstaff, Gilmore, & Thelwell, 2016). Parenthetically, empirical research
14 (e.g., Stephenson, Vargo & Seville, 2010) indicates that organizational resilience may
15 be greater in the health and community domain than other sectors, thus indicating that
16 sport might be a fruitful context to example organizational resilience.. To the best of our
17 knowledge, the only study of organizational resilience in sport was conducted by
18 Wicker, Filo, and Cuskelly (2013), exploring the organizational resilience of
19 community sport clubs in the aftermath of major cyclone and flood events. Using data
20 from a survey of sport clubs ($n = 200$) in Queensland, Australia, the findings showed
21 that clubs predominantly used human and financial resources in their recovery efforts,
22 with organizational resilience having a significant positive effect on the extent of the
23 club's perceived overall recovery alongside the number of members and the use of
24 government grants. Those clubs that typically used outdoor sport facilities exclusively

1 (viz. equestrian, golf, and motor sports) recovered to a significantly lesser extent than
2 clubs providing other sports. These data can be interpreted to indicate that it may be
3 preferable for organizations to dedicate their efforts on sharing and mobilizing third-
4 party physical resources where possible to reduce susceptibility to external turbulence
5 (such as natural disasters or terrorism), rather than the maintenance of spare capacity to
6 buffer the impact of turbulent events (cf. Gittell et al., 2006). This may be particularly
7 pertinent for sport organizations given the prevalent use of public policy to attempt to
8 maximize utilization of sport facilities (Iversen & Cuskelly, 2015), and the potential
9 public perception of inefficiency associated with under-utilization of resources provided
10 from public funds (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2017).

11 Overall, organizational resilience not only influences the positive, optimal
12 functioning of the organization itself, but also has the potential to significantly influence
13 resilience in athletes and teams. The body of knowledge in this area remains at a nascent
14 stage and empirical examination of organizational resilience is rather scant both in
15 general and sport psychology contexts, with researchers facing challenges concerning
16 conceptualization and operationalization. In particular, more research is needed to
17 understand the complex relationships between individual, team, and organizational
18 resilience. Nevertheless, the landscape of elite sport presents an array of complex
19 adaptive systems that offer rich opportunities to examine and influence resilience in
20 individuals and organizations.

21 **Conclusion**

22 To conclude, we draw on the words of Mahoney and Bergman (2002), who
23 stated that the specific sociocultural conditions in which an individual functions must be
24 considered when examining competence, and that “failing to do so may lead to a view

1 of positive adaptation as a static phenomenon with relevance to only a minority of
2 persons in select circumstances” (p. 212). Given there is growing evidence pointing to
3 the central role of resilience for sustained sporting success and highlighting this
4 construct as a key area of development for athletes, teams, and organizations, it is
5 reassuring that researchers and practitioners have begun to gain a better practical
6 understanding of resilience at multiple levels of analysis and intervention in line with
7 the praxis of our profession.

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