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Managing Community Sport Organisations in Favelas during Crisis: Impacts on Community Resilience

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore and describe how a recent public health emergency affected the management of community sport organisations (CSOs) in favelas and how the crisis management strategy shaped community resilience. We relied upon the stakeholder theory of crisis management, which posits that during crises, organisations should adopt management practices that address the needs of multiple stakeholders rather than merely focusing on organisational survival. We conducted 13 interviews with sport managers of CSOs located in favelas in four different regions of the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Findings show that managers respond to the crisis by focusing on community support and resilience. Three factors informed the relationship between management practices and community resilience: sense of leadership and responsibility, filling the gaps of the public sector, and equality, diversity, and inclusion practices. Our study extends the application of stakeholder theory of crisis management to suggest the importance of considering the inclusion of stakeholders (e.g., government, sport managers) who have been ignored in the proposition of the theory and in the sport management literature. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: crisis management, disadvantaged communities, extreme events, public health, resilience, social impact.

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1. Introduction

Community sport organisations (CSOs) are locally based, non-profit or voluntary associations that provide sport and physical activity opportunities to community members. They play a crucial role in promoting health, social cohesion, and youth development. While the sport management literature includes numerous studies on CSO management practices (e.g., Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020; Hoeber et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2018; Wicker & Breuer, 2011), scholars have not investigated how CSOs manage crises and the impacts of their practices on local communities. In a volatile world where extreme events and crises are increasingly frequent, we argue that this represents an important gap in the

literature, as CSOs play a crucial role in supporting the social development of the communities in which they operate (Edwards, 2015; Skinner et al., 2008).

While extreme events can affect CSOs in any context, organisations in low- and medium-income countries[i] (World Bank, 2024) are disproportionately impacted compared to those in high-income countries due to structural vulnerabilities and limited funding alternatives (Hallegatte et al., 2016). Therefore, exploring the impacts of extreme events on CSOs in low- and medium-income countries has additional humanitarian importance. Depending on how CSOs manage crises generated by such events, they can have positive impacts on the local communities where they are located, leading to desirable social outcomes, such as community resilience and recovery. Considering the importance of the context, we investigate CSOs in Brazilian favelas, which are highly vulnerable communities that typically lack government support (Cardin, 2024). Therefore, in this study, we aimed to explore and describe how a recent public health emergency affected the management of CSOs in favelas and how the crisis management strategy adopted affected community resilience. Public health emergency has been defined as an occurrence or imminent threat of a disease or health condition that creates a high risk of significant numbers of fatalities and/or long-term disabilities in human beings (Sharma et al., 2024).

We used the case of COVID-19, a public health emergency, to investigate how CSO managers in favelas managed the crisis it generated. While the pandemic was the trigger that created the emergency, the crisis had significant organisational consequences for the CSOs. Regarding crisis management strategies, prior to our study, we did not know whether these organisations would simply cease operations — given that they were prohibited from conducting their primary activities (in-person sport and physical activity classes) — or whether they would adapt and find ways to continue. If adaptation did occur, we were uncertain about which strategies and management practices they would employ to build resilience and survive the crisis. Assuming positive adaptive capabilities among the CSOs (sufficient to survive the crisis), we expected that these improved capabilities would also benefit the wider community, supporting its path toward greater resilience. That was an opportunity to study the relationship between CSO management and community resilience, which is one of the desirable social outcomes of crisis management (Pfefferbaum et al., 2015).

For this study, we apply the following definition of community resilience: "the collective ability of a neighbourhood or geographically defined area to deal with stressors and efficiently resume the rhythms of daily life through cooperation following shocks" (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015, p. 255). Then, we build upon Norris et al.'s (2008) conceptual framework, which portrays community resilience as an emergent ability arising from the dynamic interaction of four capacities: community competence, information and communication, social capital, and economic power. This is arguably the best framework to explain the role of local organisations. For instance, their concept of community competence directly addresses how local organisations contribute to collective action, decision-making, and problem-solving during crisis. The four adaptive capacities they identify all implicitly or explicitly depend on local organisational structures. Therefore, supported by this

framework, strategies that CSO managers used to manage the crisis would be related to the community resilience (either in a positive or negative way).

The scarcity of research on CSO management and their relationship with community resilience can be partially attributed to the socioeconomic contexts of previous studies, which have been predominantly conducted in high-income countries such as Australia, the United States, and Canada (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2014; Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020; Hoeber et al., 2015; Sotiriadou & Wicker, 2013). These studies have focused primarily on exploring how effective management can provide better opportunities for participation in sport, dance, recreation, and other physical activities (Misener & Doherty, 2009), but they have not addressed either crisis management or the impact of management on community resilience.

To design the study, we drew on the stakeholder theory of crisis management (Alpaslan et al., 2009), which posits that during external crises, organisations should address stakeholders' needs — in line with the principles of stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) — rather than merely focusing on organisational survival. The theory proposes that, beyond contractual obligations, organisations must uphold their social and ethical responsibilities toward multiple stakeholders during crises (Alpaslan et al., 2009). This tenet aligns with community resilience, where the capacity to withstand and recover from adversity is fundamentally dependent on the strength of relationships among organisations, individuals, and institutions within a community. Organisations that fulfil their ethical responsibilities to stakeholders during times of crisis are therefore expected to generate social impacts that support a more resilient community. In the sport management literature, we identified only a few studies exploring crisis management in CSOs (Parnell et al., 2019; Wicker et al., 2013). However, these studies did not examine the relationship between CSO management and community resilience. To address our aim, we seek to answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How did managers of favela CSOs respond to a public health emergency?

RQ2: What factors affected the relationship between management practices and community resilience? If any, how?

Literature Review

Stakeholder Theory of Crisis Management

A limitation of the stakeholder theory when applied to situations of crisis is that the theory tends to define the stakeholders that matter based on the salience framework. Mitchell et al. (1997) defined salience based on three stakeholder attributes – power, legitimacy, and urgency. The problem is that applying this principle during crises would exclude those who need the most the support from organisations. Therefore, to understand how CSO managers in favelas support residents during a public health emergency, we draw upon the stakeholder theory of crisis management. The relationship between the stakeholder theory of crisis management (Alpaslan et al., 2009) and the broader stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) is that the former applies and extends the latter's fundamental principles to the context of crisis. Specifically, the stakeholder theory of crisis management emphasises that, during crises, organisations benefit from responding to stakeholders' needs, acknowledging their intrinsic value, rather than adopting either a narrower salience framework or an economic (shareholder) approach. The stakeholder theory of

crisis management does not prescribe a specific hierarchy or priority of stakeholders; instead, it emphasises that the inclusion and attention to stakeholders should be based on their potential or actual risk of harm, caused by the organisation's actions or inactions during crises. Managers are encouraged to identify stakeholders through their exposure to potential or actual threats, rather than solely based on their influence or salience. This approach ensures that stakeholders at greatest risk or experiencing potential harm receive attention during crises. The crisis-specific model thus operationalises Freeman's stakeholder theory by highlighting its relevance in complex situations of crisis.

While the stakeholder theory of crisis management has been influential to discuss crisis in mainstream management (e.g. Meintjes & Botha, 2024; Ng et al., 2022), its direct application in sport management remains limited. An explanation for this gap is that most sport organisations operate in the non-profit sector (Winand & Anagnostopoulos, 2019) and the theory was proposed for corporations. Nevertheless, the principles outlined by Alpaslan et al. (2009) resonate with existing sport management studies that emphasise the importance of stakeholder engagement during crises. For instance, Friedman et al. (2004) discuss the utility of stakeholder theory to manage "issues" within sport organisations. They define both sport organisations and issues (anything that affects organisational performance) in a broad sense. To a certain extant agreeing with Alpaslan et al. (2009), Friedman et al. presuppose that to manage issues, sport managers need to address the needs of different stakeholders, including those who might not bring an immediate financial benefit for the organisation. Leopkey and Parent (2009) analysed the risks (e.g. security threats, financial crisis) that sport mega-event managers may face. Risks can be considered antecedents of foreseeable crisis in the management of a sport event. According to the authors, sport managers manage stakeholders' expectations when they see an imminent risk primarily through strategic prioritisation of stakeholder needs. For instance, a strategic decision to manage risk (and potentially crisis) is to anticipate stakeholders' expectations about how their needs will be addressed. Then, managers can act accordingly. Leopkey and Parent's study supports Alpaslan et al.'s (2009) theory when they argue for proactive rather than reactive strategies in handling crises/risks.

Alpaslan et al. (2009) propose that the model is associated with higher frequencies of proactive behaviours from managers to face crises, implying that such behaviours may have a vital role to play in organisational resilience and survival. Organisational resilience has been defined as a combination of cognitive, behavioural, and contextual properties that increase an organisation's ability to understand its situation and develop customised responses that will allow it to survive emergencies and to prosper in the face of it (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). The rationale is that the organisation needs to survive not only to attain corporate aims but also to assist stakeholders in a moment of crisis. Alpaslan et al. (2009) argue that "developing trusting and cooperative relationships with stakeholders enable the organisation and its stakeholders to prepare and respond to crises more efficiently, effectively, and ethically" (p. 39). The theory supports the existence of a mutually beneficial process, where focusing on stakeholders' needs has positive effects on both the organisation and stakeholders. Therefore, the theory supports the argument that a relationship between specific management practices and community resilience is likely to exist.

Community Resilience

Norris et al. (2008) conceptual framework was used in this study because of the usefulness of the model to explain the role of local organisations to support community resilience after emergency and disasters. It defines community resilience through four adaptive capacities: community competence, information and communication, social capital, and economic power. The model also understands community resilience as a dynamic process linking those adaptive capacities with dynamic attributes such as robustness, redundancy, and rapidity—to successful community adaptation following emergencies and disasters. The robustness, redundancy, and rapidity of the capacities allow them to buffer or counteract the effects of stressors either individually or through substitution when one capacity is weak or compromised. For example, strong social capital can compensate for some economic shortfalls by facilitating mutual aid, while effective information systems enhance community competence by improving coordination and response flexibility. This is particular important in marginalised communities like favelas where economic struggles are very frequent, but the social network and the communication system tend to be strong.

Some studies have highlighted the importance of local organisations, particularly NGOs, in the development of community resilience (e.g., Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Magis, 2010). They argue that these organisations play a crucial role in providing support and resources to communities in times of crisis, as well as in building the capacity of communities to prepare for and respond to disasters. One key aspect of community resilience is the ability of a community to mobilise resources and coordinate efforts in response to a crisis. Local NGOs often play a central role in this process, as they are well-positioned to understand the needs and priorities of the communities they serve (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015). For example, analysing the Swedish context, Linnell (2014) found that voluntary organisations play an important role to respond to emergencies and disasters; those organisations rely mainly on traditional forms of information and communication (one of the capacities in Norris et al.'s model) to provide relief for emergencies and disasters.

In addition to their role in emergency response, local NGOs also contribute to the long-term development of community resilience by building the capacity of communities to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of disasters. For instance, relying on social capital and community competence, Mutch (2023) found that schools take responsibility to mitigate the impacts of extreme events (e.g., earthquake, pandemics) and support their communities before, during and after emergencies and disasters. In the current study, we want to advance the knowledge by investigating not only if or when, but mainly how NGOs provide support for community resilience.

Management Practices in CSOs

We were not able to find articles in the sport management literature discussing how crises affect management practices of CSOs and how such practices could lead to community resilience. However, the literature has a few articles discussing how crises affect management practices in CSOs and how such practices could lead to organisational resilience. It is relevant to review such articles for two reasons. First, they explore management practices in the context of CSOs during crisis, as we do in the current study. Second,

there is a relationship between organisational resilience and community resilience, as resilient organisations provide critical resources (e.g., services, infrastructure) during crises to boost and support community resilience (Norris et al., 2008; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007).

Analysing a sample of CSOs in Australia, Wicker et al. (2013) provided some suggestions on how such organisations could change their management practices to become more resilient and alleviate the consequences of disasters. They propose that external stakeholders are crucial in providing financial aid and access to facilities during recovery efforts. Specifically, the study asserts that CSOs should proactively pursue support from government agencies (and other external stakeholders) and consider forming interorganisational networks to enhance resource acquisition, which has a direct impact on daily management practices. Their approach matches the basic tenets of the stakeholder theory of crisis management, which advocates for a stakeholder-based approach in moments of crisis. As their focus was on organisational resilience, and not on community resilience, they suggested that other stakeholders, such as the local community and volunteers could help CSOs to recover from extreme events. In the current study, focusing on community resilience, we investigate the other direction of this relationship: how CSOs can help communities to recover from extreme events.

Parnell et al. (2019) explored the impact of austerity (a type of crisis) on English CSOs, which do vary in size, structure and governance, but primarily have the aim of providing sport and physical activity opportunities to people in low-income communities. Similar to Wicker et al. (2013), they argue that external stakeholders, mainly governmental agencies, are crucial in providing financial aid in times of austerity. Then, they discuss management practices (e.g., fundraising) which may make CSOs more resilient during crisis. They do not discuss community resilience, but they do emphasise how stakeholders are involved in forming networks, securing resources, and adapting to tackle austerity-induced crisis. Once more the principles of the stakeholder management theory of crisis management are present in the analysis, where the authors highlight the important of various stakeholders not only those with financial power to help the organisations to overcome austerity.

Defining and understanding effective management practices is essential for responding to crises and for shaping proactive strategies when crises come (Comfort et al., 2010). Therefore, we believe it is also important to review the sport management literature related to management practices that define the effectiveness of CSOs, even when studies do not approach crisis directly. To understand organisational effectiveness, previous studies in sport management have investigated organisational capacity, which forms the foundations of management practices (Light, 2004). Wicker and Breuer (2011) define organisational capacity as the organisation's potential (structure plus behaviours) that can be used to carry on management practices and then achieve organisational goals. Investigating German sport clubs, they found that acquiring resources – mainly infrastructure and human resources – is a fundamental practice to facilitate operations and create organisational capacity. Similarly, Doherty and Cuskelly (2020), studying organisational capacity of CSOs in Canada, found that the ability to acquire human resources (particularly volunteers) represents the most critical dimension of capacity for such organisations to perform well on their daily activities. Misener and Doherty (2013) explored how CSOs engage with external

partners. They found that partnerships often lead to enhanced organisational capacity by providing necessary resources such as facilities, equipment, and funding, which directly impact day-to-day operations. There is limited literature on CSOs in low- and medium-income countries. The few exceptions (e.g., Marshall & Barry, 2015) do not investigate either management practices or effectiveness of the CSOs, rather they focus on how sport can contribute to social development in the region, frequently adopting a sport for development approach.

The lack of studies examining how crises affect the management practices of CSOs and how such practices contribute to community resilience represents an important research gap. Local organisations serve as frontline responders in extreme events (e.g., natural disasters, pandemics), yet their crisis management practices are understudied during these critical periods (Kapucu et al., 2022). While the sport management literature has produced valuable information on CSO management, the impact of management practices on community resilience still needs to be investigated.

There is also a lack of studies on CSOs in developing countries. While the literature on sport for development has provide valuable investigations whose contexts are developing countries (Gadais et al., 2023; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012), previous studies have not focused on the role of CSOs and their managers. Rather, they have focused on sport itself and how it can promote social development.

The Context: CSOs in Communities Deprived of Resources in Brazil

To understand management of CSOs in favelas, we need to understand the socioeconomic context where these organisations are located. At the macro level, favelas are located in Brazil, a medium-income country according to the World Bank (2024). Despite its middle-income status, Brazil has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world. It has had a Gini coefficient consistently above 0.50 in recent decades, mainly because the richest 10% of Brazilians capture approximately 55% of the national income (Cardin, 2025). In 2023, the percentage of Brazil's population with a per capita household income below the poverty line was 27.4% and the proportion of the population living below the extreme poverty line was 4.4% – indicating serious concerns with poverty (IBGE, 2024). Brazil's inequality ranks among the most severe in Latin America and worldwide (Cardin, 2025).

According to the 2022 Census conducted by the "Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística" (IBGE, 2024), approximately 16.4 million people – representing 8.1% of Brazil's total population – reside in favelas, marking a significant increase from the 2010 Census, which reported that 6% of the population lived in such areas (Carneiro & Saraiva, 2024). These figures underscore the significant role that favelas play in Brazil's urban landscape and highlight the ongoing challenges related to housing, infrastructure, and social services in these communities. Favelas represent the micro socioeconomic context of the current study.

Favelas are informal settlements that have become the main form of affordable housing in large Brazilian cities like Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo (Williamson, 2017). Favelas have been mistranslated to English as slums, shantytowns, or ghettos, yet none of these terms adequately captures what favelas represent in Brazil. They are neighbourhoods that emerge from unmet housing needs, developed without governmental

regulation and based on the culture and available resources of their residents (Williamson, 2019). Favelas are resource-deprived communities because they receive limited government assistance (Williamson, 2019). In this context, residents become more vulnerable to impacts of crises, disasters and extreme events (Béné et al., 2012). Considering this context, we applied the stakeholder dynamics used in the stakeholder theory of crisis management (i.e. considering the salience of stakeholders based on the principle of need and not on their economic value or power) to investigate how CSOs change their practices to respond to a crisis.

2. Materials and Methods

We follow Denscombe (2014) to analyse the current case of CSOs in favelas. The case offered a rare opportunity to investigate processes and relationships between management practices and community resilience in favelas during an extreme event. If a relationship between CSO management practices and community resilience exists, then the application of some of the practices in similar contexts can have a humanitarian importance. The purpose of the case study was theory-led, as we use it as an illustration of how a particular theory – stakeholder theory of crisis management – applies in a real-life setting. By analysing the case, we aim to provide examples of which management practices supported the development of community resilience. Therefore, the case study has potential for analytic generalisation, which aims to test and expand the application of the theory in different contexts (Yin, 2013). Findings from the case may be transferable to other CSOs and can help to inform their crisis management strategies when seeking to support community resilience.

Procedures and Participants

The ethics committee of the first author's university approved the project. An information sheet was provided to the interviewees, explaining the aims of the research and their rights, and asking their permission to record the interview. Considering the very specific population of interest (CSO mangers in Brazilian favelas), limited budget, and access constraints to the site, we used a convenience sampling strategy (Bryman, 2016). Literature supports that convenience sampling is common and acceptable in qualitative inquiry, where the aim is rich description of a phenomenon rather than statistical generalisation (Creswell & Poth, 2024). Two of the authors who live in favelas were responsible for selecting the participants because they knew the aim of the study, had access to CSOs and had discernment to choose participants with different characteristics. To define the number of interviews, we applied the principle of theoretical saturation (Guest et al., 2006). We ended up conducting 13 interviews with sport managers of CSOs located in favelas in Rio de Janeiro during the first semester of 2022. The main criterion that informed our strategy to select CSOs was geographic location, to avoid hearing voices from only one region of the city. Therefore, the selected CSOs were in favelas were located in four different regions of the city: (1) Morro do Alemão, (2) Baixada Fluminense, (3) Rocinha, and (4) Região Metropolitana. We also tried to select male and female manager. Despite our efforts, we had difficulty to recruit female managers. Ten of the managers were males. The two authors of this study who live in favelas confirmed through anecdotal observations that only one out of four sport leaders in favelas are female (Table 1). Although not ideal, our sample

represents this proportionality. We conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews, where we had broad questions/guided topics to ensure that we were covering the key areas while allowing conversation to flow naturally (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Examples of broad questions included: please, tell us how your sport organisation responded to the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and how your organisation supported the community during that crisis.

Table 1 – Characteristics of participants and sport programmes

Manager	Gender	Sport	Location
A	Male	Boxing	Morro do Alemão
B	Female	Dance	Morro do Alemão
C	Male	Swimming	Morro do Alemão
D	Female	Gymnastics	Morro do Alemão
E	Male	Basketball	Baixada Fluminense
F	Male	Football	Baixada Fluminense
G	Male	Football	Baixada Fluminense
H	Male	Futsal	Rocinha
I	Male	Muay Thai	Rocinha
J	Male	Tennis	Rocinha
K	Male	Cycling	Região Metropolitana
L	Male	Karate	Região Metropolitana
M	Female	Boxing	Região Metropolitana

Data Analysis

All interviews were conducted and recorded in Portuguese by two members of the research team who are native speakers. Then, the interviews were fully transcribed in Portuguese and translated to English by the first author who is also bilingual Portuguese English. A third person fluent in both languages back translated a sample of the interviews. No major differences were found between the versions. Interviews lasted from 25 to 40 minutes. We used NVivo 12 to undertake an iterative coding exercise and to identify key themes. The software helped us to organise the codes and explore areas of commonality. Based on this exercise, we identified and named the key themes described below. We followed the six steps of reflexive thematic analysis proposed by Braun et al. (2018). The themes that we present in the results section are meaning-based patterns that were constructed through our analysis of the interviews in semantic ways. The first author coded the interviews; codes were then discussed with the second author, meeting multiple times to discuss discrepancies. After agreeing about the codes, we developed the themes. Braun et al.'s (2018) reflexive thematic analysis considers theme development as fundamentally interpretive, and researcher driven. Our themes were constructed or developed, not found, and we considered researchers' subjectivity a resource, not a bias to be eliminated. Examples of codes that informed the first theme (shift to online engagement) included sudden/forced change, gradual adoption of digital tools, no choice but to

go online, and transition from in-person to online. After coding the interviews, the first author visited some of the participants and their programmes in favelas to collect field notes. We also gathered information from local mainstream media on how the pandemic affected communities in favelas and how they responded to the crisis. Field notes and media reports allowed us to triangulate the interview data, although the media data were not collected systematically enough to constitute a full document analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore and describe how a recent public health emergency affected the management of CSOs in favelas and how the crisis management strategy affected community resilience. Before analysing codes and themes to answer our research questions, we learned from the interviews that the context of favelas created a special case study, with unique characteristics. Understanding such context was fundamental for us to explore management practices and their impact on resilience. Many positive characteristics of the context were mentioned in different interviews. For instance, managers were proud to say that the local community had people with many talents and that their sporting programmes existed to serve the local community. Manager K (cycling) said, "We have been promoting cycling as a tool for social transformation. We focus on strategies to reduce inequalities, promote citizenship, and facilitate income generation". However, some challenging characteristics were also mentioned. Violence was one of these. To illustrate the violence that surrounds some favelas, Manager A (boxing) said, "I have never seen a male relative in my family dying of natural causes. All died by gun". Opportunities and talents but also violence have somehow shaped the objectives of CSOs in favelas. Many managers expressed in their interviews that the mission of CSOs are related to "keep kids safe" when their parents go work or after school hours. For example, Manager J (tennis) said: "The main objective of our organisation is taking the children off the streets, to prevent them spending their idle time in the streets. We try to guide them to use their idle time in sport". There is an implicit message in quotations like this that kids can be target by crime or violence if they stay in the streets.

Another characteristic of the context is the challenge they face to have suitable facilities. Most programmes share facilities with other organisations. As Manager L (karate) explained, they need to use the building of a local church to run the karate programme: "The church is us, based on our faith; this needs to be separate from the building. We need to use the building for the benefit of the whole community, to teach karate classes". The lack of adequate infrastructure affects the number of kids that each programme can receive. Running a very popular programme, Manager F (football) said:

Recently, during the activities, I witnessed a similar number of kids outside the sporting pitch, replicating the activities that I was proposing to the kids who are on the pitch. Then, I said to A [his co-manager], we need to do something, the demand is too high. We need to expand our offer. I get emotional because I've seen kids doing the activities without equipment, without support, outside the pitch…

Wicker and Breuer (2011) found that CSO managers in Germany rely on different types of resources to create organisational capacity; however, these managers perceive infrastructure resources, such as sports facilities, as less difficult to acquire compared to

human and financial resources. In a similar way, in Doherty and Cuskelly's (2020) study, Canadian managers do not seem to be concerned about either the quality or the availability of facilities. In our findings, sport managers frequently mentioned infrastructure and financial resources as barriers for them to operate in their full capacity, while human resources were not mentioned. The context affects management practices of CSOs in favelas, making them different from those in high-income country organisations. Understanding these contextual differences is fundamental to keep our following analysis in perspective. We focus now on presenting and discussing the results related to manager's responses to the crisis, to respond to RQ1.

RQ1: How did managers of favela CSOs respond to a public health emergency?

The interviews revealed that the pandemic imposed significant challenges for CSOs in favelas, compelling managers to adapt their management practices in several ways. While the managers provided a wide variety of examples on how their management practices changed to address the crisis, the analytical work through our codes informed two main themes: shift to online engagement and focus on community support.

Shift to online engagement

With the onset of lockdowns, managers quickly tried to transition to online classes to continue engaging with students and families. They express in their interviews a genuine concern about their students' physical and mental health. In the meantime, they faced challenges due to technological poverty, as many students lacked access to mobile devices and/or stable internet connections. Manager A (boxing) said: "Online sessions were such an 'experience', a forced 'experience'. Some students engaged [with online training sessions], but many did not engage. The biggest challenge was access to mobile phones, technology, and internet connection". Technology poverty (or digital exclusion) in Brazil's favelas remains a pressing issue, exacerbating existing socio-economic disparities (Mari, 2023). The academic literature has just started to explore the problem mostly because of the pandemic (Nemer, 2022). However, in the context of CSOs, before the pandemic, this was never a topic, because the mission of such organisations did not depend on digital inclusion. All managers reported that digital exclusion created major problems for them in continuing to provide online instruction to students. Beyond the impacts on physical health, many expressed concerns about the mental health of kids who had previously been involved in social groups through sporting activities but were then isolated.

In addition to digital exclusion, some managers reported that favela residents also have space limitations. For example, Manager D (gymnastics) said:

Doing it [online sessions] reached everybody? Of course not! Many of our students have difficulties to have access to mobile phones, to have access to internet, to have space in their house to do any activity, to have any chat. Sometimes they live in one room, one space for more than seven people... That was something that created a lot of difficulties for us to have remote classes.

Despite these hurdles, efforts were made to provide some level of continuity in sport practice and engagement. Although the changes in the management practices have happened forcibly, the managers have not expressed anger or disappointment in the interviews. They sounded genuinely interested in keeping providing the best possible option

for their students. This creates a good link with the next theme: they changed their management practices to put even more emphasis on community support.

Focus on Community Support

The interview responses indicate that the CSO managers had a strong sense of community and put emphasis on collective action during the pandemic. Managers shared how they adapted their management practices to support families in need, for example, by distributing food and hygiene supplies. Manager J (tennis) informed that "During the period we stopped our sporting activities, we changed our efforts to help the families of our students, mainly with basic food baskets. The project wanted to stand by our students and their families. Many parents lost their jobs". Manager E (basketball) gave us a broader perspective on how CSOs changed their practices to support the local community:

From March 2020 to December 2021, we did social work. We helped to transport people to vaccination centres. We delivered basic food baskets. We became part of a network called 'União Rio'. They started giving us some baskets. We moved from 20 to 100 baskets per week. We got more than this. In December 2021, we had delivered 8,700 basic food baskets. We like to think in terms of families. We helped thousands of families. […] We are a small team in our organisation.

In changing the focus from participants to the whole community, from sporting activities to social work, favela managers decided to address the needs of stakeholders who were not the primary beneficiaries of the organisations. This change was not informed by their mission – provide sporting activities to residents – and, therefore, could have a negative impact on the survival of the organisations. One can argue that they did not have options, as they could not run sporting activities anyhow. However, instead of changing their focus to community support, they could simply shut down and wait until the crisis is gone. Many organisations in other sectors did this. Manager J (tennis) said that this option was proposed to him: "Many people told me, 'shut down the project'. But I couldn't. How could I do this to a hundred plus kids? It is very easy to say, 'shut down' when you are not from here, when you don't live here". Despite financial constraints, none of the managers shut their doors. Manager B (dance) said: "We then started analysing alternatives [rather than shutting down]. We had very few opportunities. We did not have money…". As an option for shutting down, they chose to change their main activities and focus on "others". This made the organisations more resilient. Manager A (boxing) explained:

The reason why this organisation became resilient was 'the people'. We, Abraço Campeão [name of the organisation] became a unit of force to combat the pandemic. For example, we created the "moto-taxi Wakanda[ii]" operation. We recruited partners [people in the community] to deliver basic food baskets, personal hygiene baskets to residents who were not supposed to leave their houses. "Moto-taxi Wakanda" went to the most remote places in Morro do Alemão to deliver baskets to residents. We became stronger.

Results like this one show how our findings extend the utility of the stakeholder theory of crisis management (Alpaslan et al., 2009) to the context of non-profit sport organisations. For instance, using organisational resilience as an indicator of positive management of the crisis, we found support to apply Alpaslan et al.'s foundational assumptions to CSOs. Sport organisations in favelas became more resilient by focusing on

residents' needs. Sport organisations in favelas became more resilient by focusing on residents' needs. This resilience, shaped by community-centred approaches, speaks to a small but growing body of inquiry within sport management scholarship seeking to understand how organisations sustain themselves during and after crises. For instance, Wicker et al. (2013) examined how CSOs adapt their management practices during extreme events to build resilience. Applying some principles of the stakeholder theory of crisis management, they suggest that these organisations should consider the interest of different stakeholders but should focus on external stakeholders that could provide financial means for the organisations to recover. Although they were investigating CSOs, their results showed a utilitarian logic consistent with the theory, where organisations sought stakeholders who could help with organisational resilience and survival.

Elaborating deeper, our results show a different logic, which we call the socially responsible logic. We found that in favelas, CSOs became more resilient by focusing on external stakeholders, specifically on local community, which could not support them financially. They focused on local community because residents needed their support to become resilient and survive. In return, the community supported the CSOs back, making them more resilient. It happens through a primary route. That is, to meet the needs of local community, the CSO managers adopted proactive management practices, which also led to organisational resilience. But this also happened through a secondary route, where the gratitude and positive reactions (including continuing resilience) of the residents came back making to the organisation in a virtuous cycle, which made them more resilient. This advances the initial presuppositions of the utility of the stakeholder theory of crisis management in sport management. In the literature, Friedman et al. (2004) presupposed that to manage issues, sport managers need to be proactive and address the needs of many stakeholders, including non-primary beneficiaries. Leopkey and Parent (2009) analysed risks for sport mega-events and propose proactive decisions to manage risks though addressing multiple stakeholders' needs. These are important initial results. In this study, we move a step forward, from issues and risks to actual crisis to show that proactive management practices focusing on local community can help CSOs to develop organisational resilience.

Resilience through focus on community support led CSOs leaders to do more than distributing basic food and personal hygiene baskets. For instance, Manager K (cycling) describes how he and his collaborators used their time to create a document that would benefit the CSO and the community after the crisis:

From that moment, we developed the Agenda 2030 for our region. This is a book with proposals for local development. It was supported and funded by 'Casa Fluminense', a non-profit civil society organisation that helps to develop public policy in the city of Rio de Janeiro. This organisation looks for medium, long-term solutions to help people in the community. This is a document to press on public power to address our needs. The pandemic was a moment that facilitated the organisation. Every crisis – the pandemic was a crisis – can be a path for new opportunities. From the most difficult moment, we found solutions for complex problems of our community.

Initiatives like this one illustrate how changing management practices helped CSOs to create organisational resilience. At the same time, the focus on local residents and

their needs had a direct impact on community resilience. This creates a good link to our RQ2.

RQ2: What factors affected the relationship between management practices and community resilience? If any, how?

The interviews show a strong relationship between CSO practices and community resilience. CSO managers put the pandemic in perspective considering other crises and extreme events that favela residents have passed. Manager G (football) explained: "The COVID-19 pandemic was a very specific case in public health. But, in fact, we live a constant pandemic: The lack of jobs, the lack of equal opportunities for all… While there is a lack of respect for others, we cannot progress". Beyond the chronic inequality problems that favela residents face, they also face specific extreme events on a regular basis, as Manager E (basketball) said:

Rains have been causing destruction here in the West zone. We have had a lot of floodings over the years, many people lost their houses. We collect donations for people who lose everything. We were doing this in January, February 2020, when we got a flood. Then, pandemic hit us here in March 2020.

CSO managers see themselves as community leaders in favelas, with a responsibility not only to provide sport activities, but also to support the community when crises hit. We consider the focus on community support as an adapted practice, adopted on smaller scales during other extreme events. Despite their supporting practices, these organisations continued running their main activities: providing sport for the local community. However, such practices were elevated to the main task of the CSOS during the pandemic, when they were not allowed to have sport classes anymore. Therefore, the sense of leadership and responsibility was a major factor that affected the relationship between management practices and community resilience. For instance, while the CSO managers followed all guidelines of the authorities to stop with sporting activities, they also took the frontline to organise support for affected families and, through their actions, to make sure that their organisations still serve the community.

Analysing our data we found three factors that represent the relationship between management practices and community resilience: sense of leadership and responsibility, filling the gaps of the public sector, and equality, diversity, and inclusion practices.

Sense of Leadership and Responsibility

Analysing the pandemic crisis, Manager K (cycling) explained some leadership decisions that affected community resilience:

Yes, in fact, we never stopped. We did not have a chance to stop. We had to keep going to help people who were out there, suffering. We had no means to stop. […] People used to come at our doors asking for help. We are leaders, we are organisations, we have a duty. Most people did not have anyone to ask for help, then they asked us.

Many codes highlight the role of community leaders and organisations in fostering community resilience. The sense of duty to help others indicates that management practices centred on social responsibility were crucial for community resilience. However, the relationship between CSO management practices and community resilience was not straightforward as it might appear. First, some managers reported that their own staff (teachers, supporting staff) were struggling with the pandemic. They decided that they

needed to support their team first in order to then support the community. For instance, Manager A (boxing) said: "I had to take care of my team, for my team to take care of the people in the community". Other managers reported personal struggles and losses, which affected their ability to perform their managerial tasks. Manager D (gymnastics) said:

How could we donate anything to anyone if we didn't have it ourselves? So, we had that period… where we needed to restructure ourselves. We started with that impulse to talk… to help other people, but suddenly we saw ourselves in our own darkest places, with fear. We were in conflict. Then, we started trying to get stronger, to then help other people to get stronger.

In previous studies on organisational resilience (Parnell et al., 2019; Wicker et al., 2013), feelings and struggles of managers were not a topic. They assumed managers as professionals only. They portray managers as those responsible for finding solutions for the crisis. This is certainly their professional function. However, in the case of extreme events, this may misrepresent the complexity of crisis management. In the current study, we advance the literature by showing the importance of considering managers as stakeholders who are also going to be personally affected by the crisis they are managing, mainly in the case of extreme events.

In the stakeholder theory of crisis management, Alpaslan et al. (2009) report managers as the crucial actors to engage and maintain relationships with a broad set of external stakeholders, with the aim of effectively manage crisis. Empirical studies in sport management literature (e.g. Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020; Misener & Doherty, 2013) follow this approach. However, neither the theory nor the applied studies consider managers as a stakeholder who is also affected by crisis. In the current study, the fact that staff and managers needed to become personally resilient first to, then, help the community members to become resilient is an important addition to the literature.

Between those who reported that they needed to overcome personal struggles and those who did not, many CSO managers told us how their management practices helped community resilience. For example, Manager K (cycling) said, "…they [residents] talked about the social actors who helped the community to face it. 'Pedala Queimados' [name of the organisation] is very proud for having led such actions. We were sad because people needed food. But we are happy we managed to alleviate their pain".

Filling the Gaps of the Public Sector

CSO managers pointed out the absence of governmental support in the areas where they are located. This is a common theme across all interviews. Some managers have absorbed the long-term lack of public interventions in favelas and assumed that it was their obligation to support the community. Others have explicitly talked about this and how their organisations have filled the gaps left by the public sector during the pandemic. Manager D (gymnastics) said:

We did not have governmental support for that. It was mainly a community job. All those [NGO] entities came because they saw that a strong community job was being done to defend the public health of the community. Not only the public health related to coronavirus, but also the public health related to mental health. I feel very fortunate for having been part of this network. So, we went to the front line. We will be in the frontline as many times as necessary.

Manager D was highlighting the partnership between CSO and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to support the community. While other NGOs got funds to provide basic food personal hygiene baskets, the CSOs were responsible for receiving those baskets and distribute them in the communities, supporting resilience. These baskets were provided to address the basic needs of families that had requested public support but had not received it. For instance, Manager I (muay thai) told us a story about a single mom with three kids who collected a basket on a weekly basis:

She tried to contact the local authorities, but she never got an answer. We heard about other people saying that their request for help was "under analysis" for 6-7 months, with no answer, no help. People were unemployed and desperate. I heard many stories like this one.

Manager M (boxing) confirmed the lack of public support and the role of politics on all that: "When you realised that there was politics involved in all that, that the government was not helping, it gave me anger and hatred". During the pandemic, Brazil was under a neoliberal regime that preferred to deny the seriousness of the public health emergency (Canineu & Munoz, 2021). It is beyond the scope of the current study to analyse the political scene of the country at that moment. However, as quotations like the one above indicate, the denial mode adopted by the federal government had a highly negative impact on those who needed support the most. Using the logic of social responsibility, we proposed that favela CSOs became more resilient by focusing on stakeholders who could not support them financially — specifically, local community residents. An important way that CSOs did so was through association with other NGOs. Collaboration among local NGOs enhances community resilience during crises — for example, by pooling resources, coordinating efforts, and leveraging complementary networks to deliver more coherent and context-sensitive responses. This kind of pre-existing social capital has been found in other studies to be critical to community resilience (Brown & Westaway, 2011; Rocha, 2023). Norris et al.'s (2008) conceptual framework indicated that not only social capital, but also other capacities such as community competence, information and communication shape community resilience. The association with other NGOs indicate how CSOs relied upon social capital to facilitate community competence and information and communication. Exemplifying this, manager A (boxing) said:

What cheered me up… was the engagement and determination of people who were benefiting from our support. We did not know if the pandemic would last one month, three months, or one year more. We felt encouraged by thanksgiving messages, by shared messages in social media showing that people were not losing hope.

The relationship between CSOs and the government has been explored in previous studies, which mainly highlight the role of the public sector as the main funder of sport programmes (e.g. Edwards, 2015; Sotiriadou & Wicker, 2013). More specifically on crisis management, Wicker et al. (2013) found that, in Australia, the government provided financial support to hundreds of CSOs to rebuild infrastructure when they were affected by extreme natural events such as flooding and cyclones. The situation in Brazilian favelas appears quite different. While some CSOs do receive government financial funding (primarily through sponsorship and sports incentive laws[iii]), the interviews revealed that during the pandemic crisis, the government provided minimal support to CSOs. More

significantly, from a community resilience perspective, the government offered very little assistance to local residents.

The stakeholder theory of crisis management does not explicitly discuss the role of the government or public sector during crises. However, Alpaslan et al. (2009) do mention that successful crisis management should consider multiple stakeholders' interests. The theory emphasises the importance of including a broad set of stakeholders in crisis preparation and response, which should include government or public sector entities. Based on our findings, we suggest that when using the theory to investigate CSOs, the role of government should be further explored. We found that CSOs in favelas have filled gaps left by the government in supporting community resilience. However, the theory and our findings suggest that a better collaboration between the first and third sectors might offer superior solutions for developing community resilience during crises. This is a point that deserves future investigations mainly because the support the government with favela residents was minimal. The stakeholder theory of crisis management suggested that community resilience could have been improved if the government had acted more like the CSOs did.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Practices

Management practices that support equality, diversity and inclusion represent another factor that have fostered community resilience. Interviews revealed that inclusivity and breaking down cultural barriers are common practices among CSOs in favelas. By challenging stereotypes and ensuring that all community members have access to opportunities, CSOs have supported a sense of belonging among vulnerable individuals. For example, Manager F (football) said:

Another important thing is… when we talk about a football project in favelas, people think, this is an activity for boys. However, football is for everybody. Girls need to have their space in football. Here in Cultura Urbana [name of the CSO], we value this a lot: women participation in sport. Why cannot girls participate in sport? Why cannot girls play football? We need to broaden our horizons. We must change the culture that football is only for boys. Football is for girls too. They can do it if they want. Their place is where they want to be.

Inclusivity goes beyond demographic characteristics. Manager F explained how the CSO that he manages has helped to include people who were previously discriminated against based on the history of the place where they are located:

The Cultura Urbana was born here. We have a great importance for the community of Curupaití[iv]. We've been here since 2010. The sporting programme has been the most welcomed project here. Today, we work with children and grandchildren of people who had Hansen disease in the past. We do not put any focus on the disease… The community has a sad history; because of the isolation it suffered many years ago. When we started the project, it brought happiness, it brought hope.

According to the managers, this culture of support for equality and inclusion was important to provide extra support for community resilience during the pandemic. Manager M (boxing) said that that support for inclusion creates "…a spirit of union, of collectiveness, of being together… That was what brought resilience. This was what made the community to be able to restart, to reinvent themselves". Manager B (dance) also

highlighted the importance of inclusive practices to nurture the community resilience beyond the pandemic: "Vidançar [name of the CSO] was born from an idea to bring inclusive education to children in the favela. Today, after supporting the community during the pandemic, we have four times more students than we had before". Vidançar is an example of inclusive CSO as it offers ballet classes for both boys and girls and supports their students beyond sporting activities – for example, by providing off-hours mathematic and language classes to help kids to do well in school.

While the sport management literature has many studies on equality, diversity and inclusion, we have not found studies approaching the topic in association with crisis management. This opens a venue for future investigation.

4. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Studies

Before analysing the practices that CSO managers used to respond to a crisis, we learned that the context where such organisations are located had a substantial impact on management. Studies in the sport management literature have investigated CSO in high-income countries where, despite their challenges, the government tends to financially support such organisations. Unlike previous studies, our study was conducted in an area deprived of resources. As informal settlements, favelas have lacked governmental support to develop sport infrastructure and programmes. A commonly heard explanation for the lack of support is that people who live in favelas are "invaders" and do not pay taxes. This is a misconception that does not reflect the reality (Nemzer, 2016; Williamson, 2017). This context has affected how CSO managers responded to crises.

During the recent COVID-19 crisis, some management practices that were effective in other contexts (e.g. shifting to online classes/sessions) was not effective for favela CSOs. They were ineffective in favelas due to the context, which is characterised by technological poverty and space limitations within households. Despite the barriers, most managers were determined to not simply shut their doors. Then, they shifted their management practices to support the community. This proactive approach not only addressed immediate needs, such as food and hygiene supplies, but also created a sense of solidarity and collective action, making the community more resilient. Examples of proactive practices included contacting and building networks with other NGOs to request and distribute basic food parcels (usually provided by churches and humanitarian agencies) and educating local residents about the importance of adhering to safety regulations to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Our findings offer several good examples of how these practices generated goodwill within the community. CSO managers reported that residents returned to express gratitude for the support they had received, even months after the end of the health emergency. They also reported that on many occasions during the crisis, residents who had received help subsequently joined forces with CSOs to assist other residents.

This support from CSOs to local communities aligns with the stakeholder theory of crisis management, which posits that organisations that consider the interests of various stakeholders during a crisis can achieve better overall outcomes. Therefore, our findings carry some important implications for stakeholder dynamics as the socially responsible logic employed by CSOs in favelas – prioritising community needs over organisational

survival – led to both enhanced community resilience and organisational resilience. A key implication for stakeholder dynamics is the existence of a virtuous cycle, where organisations support residents, improving community resilience; residents in turn support the organisations, improving organisational resilience.

Another contribution to advance the theory came from findings that show that managers also have their own personal struggles to deal with crises. Neither the theory nor the applied studies in sport management consider managers as a stakeholder who is also affected by crisis; rather, the literature has considered them as the professionals who need to solve the problem. This nuanced understanding is crucial for developing effective crisis management strategies that consider the well-being of all involved in CSOs. The practical implication for stakeholder dynamics here is the existence of a hierarchical pattern of resilience development. In looking for developing community resilience through the work of local, non-profit organisations, a multiple step approach – focusing first on resilience of managers and staff, then on resilience of the community – may represent an effective way to manage crisis created by extreme events. The process is likely to continue and affect back the organisations themselves, making them more resilient.

In our case study, CSOs filled gaps left by the government agencies, which were expected to provide support to the community. Alongside with other NGOs, the CSOs became the main providers/distributors of basic goods, including food. The role of CSOs in filling these gaps reinforces the idea that they are not merely service providers but essential actors in the broader social safety net in favelas. By taking on responsibilities typically associated with governmental agencies, CSOs have demonstrated their capacity to mobilise resources and support community resilience in times of crisis. Coming back to the stakeholder theory of crisis management, the dynamics between CSOs and the government to create community resilience needs to be further explored. For example, exploring also the point of view of stakeholders in the public sector would be important to understand why they decided to get involved or not the crisis in favelas and how a different level of involvement could have led to increased levels of community resilience.

Still from a practical standpoint, government agencies and departments can use the results of this study to inform policies and strategies for supporting communities during extreme events. For example, since CSOs excel at connecting with local residents, the government could have clear strategies to collaborate with them to prepare for and mitigate crisis impacts in communities deprived of resources. We suggest that joint efforts are more likely to yield positive outcomes in building community resilience. The role of the government in such efforts is still missing. This is an area that deserves future investigations.

The study has some limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the case study has potential for analytic generalisation, however, the specific context of favelas may limit the extrapolation of results and implications to contexts with different macro socioeconomic realities. In high-income countries, during extreme events, the government may offer a strong net of support for deprived communities, which was not seen in our case study in favelas. Therefore, CSOs in such countries may not need to play multiple roles during crisis, keeping their management activities mainly focused on the mission of providing sporting activities or social networks. However, even in those contexts, it would be

interesting to explore the possibility of partnerships between government and CSOs to alleviate extreme event crises. During the pandemic, a large part of the donations to the favela residents did not come from the government, but rather from private donors or NGOs. The context may also impact the application of the stakeholder theory of crisis management. While in the current study we found support for the utility of the theory, the context of CSOs here investigated is quite specific due to the micro socioeconomic context of favelas. Despite that, results of this case study are likely to be relevant and generalisable for communities with similar contexts, which are widespread across the world in low- and middle-income countries.

Second, in the current study, we have not explored further what helped CSO managers to become personally more resilient. The fact that they needed to become personally resilient to then help resilience of staff and then the resilience of the community opens important venues for future studies in sport management. Third, community resilience was investigated from the point of view of CSO managers. Future studies can investigate this from the point of view of other stakeholders, for example community residents. While CSO managers reported what they had seen and what residents told them, the residents themselves may have a different perspective on how the CSOs helped them to become more resilient. Fourth, we do not know if the diversification of activities found in the study has had an impact on how managerial capacities of CSOs went forward, after the crisis. A future study can consider a follow-up investigation on accumulative experiences, checking gains (if any) for the organisations.

We conclude that by prioritising community needs, CSOs have not only addressed immediate challenges of an extreme event crisis but have also laid the groundwork for long-term community resilience. The insights gained from this research contribute to the broader understanding of crisis management in deprived communities and the role CSOs play in that.

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[i] We used the World Bank guide, which applies the following country classification, based on gross national income (GNI) per capita: (a) lower income country are those with a GNI per capita equal or lower than $1,145; lower middle-income, GNI per capita between $1,146 and $4,515; upper middle-income, between $4,516 and $14,005; high-income, equal or above $14,005. This is for the 2025 fiscal years, based on data from 2023 (https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups)

[ii] Wakanda is a fictional nation in sub-Saharan Africa, depicted in Marvel Comics series, particularly the Black Panther franchise.

[iii] To know more about sport incentive law in Brazil, please, refer to de Oliveira et al. (2021) and Rocha (2016).

[iv] Curupaití is region in the city that became known for hosting a leprosarium, which was opened in 1928. Nowadays, leprosy is much under control. Few patients who still got the disease are treated at municipal and state hospitals. For additional information, please, refer to Avelleira et al. (2014).