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# Recognition in Sport: Love, Rights and Solidarity

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In 1993 I started my basic course in sport sciences at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NSSS) and achieved with a Master's degree in 2001, despite my initial intention of just adding an extra year of Outdoor Studies (friluftsliv) onto the basic course. Due to interesting studies and a good social life I never regretted staying well past the plan. Coming back to the NSSS in 2011 as a PhD student has been a privilege; I have had the fortune to work with scholars who earlier were my teachers and who then inspired me to continue with my studies.

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## ABSTRACT

*The main research question in this thesis is why sport morally matters, or, reframed in Honneth's terminology, what is the potential of sport as a sphere for recognition? I have argued for the relevance of Honneth's theory in order to gain insight into sport and its value both to athletes and to society. Honneth seeks a description of human agency that is constituted and maintained through intersubjective relationships. To individuals, receiving recognition in three forms, love, rights and solidarity, is vital for developing basic self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. These forms of 'practical relation-to-self' are essential for identity-formation and autonomy, as well as being prerequisites for self-realization (Honneth, 1995, p. 129). Since recognition is intersubjective, it has to be mutual in order to be a manifestation of recognition. It therefore also affects a person's relationship to other persons.*

*Paper 1 seeks to answer the research question by discussing the three forms of recognition, or the lack of them, within sport. By discussing three instances of disrespect or struggles for recognition, I seek to show that the concept of recognition provides a good starting point for identifying, understanding and interpreting normative challenges in sport, as well as pinpointing the importance of sport as a sphere for recognition both to the individual and to society.*

*Paper 2 discusses the concept of love within sport. Taking the starting point as a case of violation, it discusses whether boxing, and perhaps sport in general, can establish a sphere for recognition in the form of self-love providing fundamental self-knowledge which is a basis for trust and care. This is a dimension of love and the building of self-confidence that Honneth does not really discuss. I argue that while boxing might have an especially strong potential for fundamental self-knowledge, some of its core features providing this relation-to-self might be shared by all sports.*

*Paper 3 discusses the concept of rights within sport. Rights as recognition constitute mutual respect between persons viewing each other as rational and responsible agents with an equal right to take part in the public formation and development of society. Departing from the case of women's exclusion from ski jumping, it is argued that women ski jumpers were entitled to compete because they had actual or potential capabilities and skills to contribute in the development of their sport. Their exclusion was therefore a violation of individual rights.*

*Paper 4 discusses the concept of solidarity within sport. Analyzing the case of transgender downhill mountain biker, Michelle Dumaresq, and her marginalization within the sport because Dumaresq was born a man, her persistence in competing was viewed as a struggle for solidarity. The argument is made that sport has a particular potential for realizing solidarity among its practitioners. Realizing the potential, however, depends to a large degree upon the rules and regulations of sport meeting requirements of fairness and justice.*

*By assessing and discussing the different forms of recognition in relation to sport, I have concluded that, on the premise of being practised according to ideals of fair play, sport has the potential for recognition in three different forms: love, solidarity and rights. This might be true of other practices as well, but it seems that sport has an especially strong potential in this respect. The aggregated recognition within sport is that all three forms are present to a significant degree. In other words, sport possesses a significant ethical potential. Basically, this is why sport morally matters.*



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## **LIST OF PAPERS**

### **Paper 1**

Andersen, W. (2015). Love, Rights, and Solidarity: Sports' Potential for Recognition. *Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research*, 68(1), 23-33.

### **Paper 2**

Andersen, W. (not published). Is there a place for love in sport? Reflections based on a case study from boxing.

### **Paper 3**

Andersen, W., & Loland, S. (2016). Jumping for recognition: Women's ski jumping viewed as a struggle for rights. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports* (Article first published online: 19 Feb 2016. DOI: 10.1111/sms.12662)

### **Paper 4**

Andersen, W., & Loland, S. (2015). Sport and the obligation of solidarity. *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, 9(3), 243-256.



## INTRODUCTION

The main question I have been struggling with from the beginning of my PhD-project, which has also been the main motivational force for doing the project, is best expressed by rephrasing the title-line of a book by one of the leading figures within sport philosophy, William Morgan (Morgan, 2006): Why does sport morally matter?<sup>1</sup> This thesis is an endeavour to answer that question.

The original topic for my dissertation was an ethical evaluation of elite sport or, more specifically, Olympic elite sport after World War II. The leading research question was whether Olympic elite sport could be justified ethically in a modern society. The project was intended to contribute to a broader scholarly examination of Olympic sport with perspectives from history, sociology and philosophy. Olympic sport is of particular interest as it is situated within a movement that is based on the explicit ideology of Olympism. Ideology here is defined as ‘a systematic set of arguments and beliefs used to justify an existing or desired social order’ (Dictionary of Political Science, 1964, p. 1) and, hence, an expression of values. In addition, Olympic sport is *elite* in that it is representative of the highest level of athletic performance. The theoretical framework of the research, Martha Nussbaum’s neo-Aristotelian approach, gave a conceptual framework for critical, normative evaluation. The plan was to compare in a critical and systematic way original and updated versions of the ideology of Olympism with the reality of the Olympic Games.

There was no lack of topical issues. The Olympic Games have been blemished with doping, corruption and international conflict. In just the last decade, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has been accused of disregarding the host nation’s breaches of human rights (Beijing 2008) and discrimination against homosexuals (Sochi 2014). The IOC’s continuous resistance towards inclusion of women’s ski jumping has been viewed as discrimination against women (Pfister, 2007; Vertinsky, Jette, & Hofmann, 2009). Instead of creating ‘a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example, and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles’ (Olympic Charter, fundamental principle §1), the Olympic Movement has, at times, appeared reactionary and as the main hindrance to realizing its own goals. The duality of the Olympic Games seemed pervasive: while, at their best, they

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<sup>1</sup> The book is called *Why sports morally matter* (Morgan, 2006).

are undoubtedly celebrations of human excellence and the joy of sport, at their worst they are arenas for exclusion or disrespect. As such, this should be an ideal field for a critical, ethical evaluation.

However, the Olympic ideals compared with reality's contradictions have been thoroughly discussed by scholars of social sciences as well as philosophers of sport (Bale & Christensen, 2004; Hoberman, 2008, 2012; Loland, 2006; Møller, 2004; Tomlinson, 2004). It seemed hard to add something of substance to the discussion. It was while struggling with the problem of finding an innovative way to assess the gap between ideals and reality in Olympic sport that I came across an alternative approach. On a PhD-course in contextual ethics in Metochi, Lesbos (Greece being a fitting place for alternative philosophical approaches to Olympic sport), I was introduced to the philosophy of Axel Honneth, a philosopher I previously knew only by name. Presented with Honneth's *The struggle for recognition. The moral grammar of social conflicts* (Honneth, 1995b), his theory of recognition seemed to provide a more fruitful approach and also entailed a change to the scope of my dissertation.

The change of theoretical perspective led, not only to a change in concepts, perspective and method, but also of the main research question. The general question of ideals and reality in Olympic sport was narrowed down to whether recognition, as defined in Honneth's theory of recognition (1995b), could be available in sport. The main research question was therefore changed to:

*What is the potential of sport as a sphere for recognition?*

## **CHAPTER 1 – AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Axel Honneth's theory of recognition is one of the most influential moral theories of our time (Brink and Owen, 2007; Petherbridge, 2011). There have been numerous PhDs and Master's degrees, as well as books and articles written on his work. Honneth's theory has been applied and/or discussed within various genres, among others philosophy of education (Hanhela, 2014; Huttunen and Murphy, 2012), economy (Nierling, 2012; Hill, 2001) and health care (Fisher and Owen, 2008; Sandberg, 2012).

### **The concept of recognition in sport**

Honneth's theory of recognition has not been applied in a larger scale within philosophy of sport. Jarvie (2011) discusses the concept of recognition in his article 'Identity, Recognition or Redistribution through Sport', but bases his article on Nancy Fraser's notion of recognition (2000). Fraser and Honneth view recognition to be a notion that is vital to understand struggles 'over identity and difference' (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 1), but they differ in their approach to the relationship between redistribution and recognition. While Honneth views recognition as the overarching moral category and distribution of goods as a derivative, Fraser claims that both recognition and redistribution are two equally important aspects of justice (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 3). In an article from 1998, Tuxill and Wigmore present a Kantian version of the concept of recognition. They explore two different versions of the notion of respect: 'recognition respect' and 'appraisal respect' (Tuxill & Wigmore, 1998, p. 105). The former is based on Kantian analysis and is restricted to intellectual and rational capacities, while 'appraisal respect' means that other persons are regarded as one regards oneself and are seen as unique individuals rather than just generalized, rational beings (Tuxill and Wigmore, 1998, p. 107). Both 'recognition respect' and 'appraisal respect' have similarities to two of Honneth's forms of recognition, namely rights and solidarity.

Tuxill and Wigmore (1998) explore the different ways in which persons can be seen as beings who demand respect, which human features trigger this demand, and whether respect in any of the versions is manifested through sport. Their conclusion is that sport is designed in such a way that the maintenance of a minimum amount of respect for other subjects is perhaps all we can hope for (Tuxill & Wigmore, 1998). Based on Honneth's theory, the claim in this thesis is

significantly expanded as I will argue that sport has a particularly strong potential for developing recognition and mutual respect between persons.

### **Aims, focus and research questions**

The focus of this dissertation is the moral significance of sport to the individual and society. More specifically, I set out to investigate struggles for recognition in modern sport. Struggles for recognition strive to re-establish a positive relation to self, to other members of society and to societal institutions or practices (Lysaker, 2011). This thesis analyses contemporary struggles in sport in order to pinpoint 1) whether these struggles are legitimate, 2) what form of recognition they seek, and 3) whether the specific form of recognition can be found within sport. A further aim has been to analyse how recognition or lack of recognition affects the athlete and the sports society. A final ambition has been to seek how sport can rectify disrespect so that legitimate claims to recognition are fulfilled.

In broad terms, this is a study on the significance of sport to the individual and society. The term ‘sport’ can be understood in many ways; it can refer to everything from spontaneous game-playing via exercise and fitness training to highly organized and professional elite sport (Coakley, 1994). The most common use of the term ‘sport’ is probably as a reference to training and competition as being organized within sports clubs and federations (Suits, 1988). In most developed countries this is one of the main leisure activities among children and youth, and elite sport is one of the most visible and attractive products on the international entertainment market<sup>2</sup>. In other words, training and competition in organized sport play a significant role in the lives of many people and in society and will be the focus of examination in this thesis.

The cases chosen to illustrate struggles for recognition are mainly from elite sport. The main reason is that elite sport presents a level where issues of recognition become very visible and pronounced both within sport and to the public in general. Moreover, while these cases concern elite sport, they also touch upon the significance of recognition in sports training and

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<sup>2</sup> On children and youth participation see Eurostat (2009), Nicholson, Hoye & Houlihan (2010) and Van Bottenburg, Rijnen & Van Sterkenburg (2005). On viewer statistics from the Olympic Games, see Hayes & Karamichas (2012), the International Olympic Committee (IOC)(2013) and Tomlinson (1996).

competition at lower levels of performance and among children and youth. At the most general level, these cases may even provide embodied and concrete examples of a human struggle for recognition in all spheres of life.

### **Research questions**

As presented in the introduction, the main research question can be specified as:

*What is the potential of sport as a sphere for recognition?*

The purpose of the articles is to utilize the concept of recognition in its various forms to examine and improve insights into the value of sport to the individual and society. Honneth's three forms of recognition are explored in three separate articles, each discussing one form of recognition.

More specifically, the main research question is operationalized into four sub-questions and four papers:

Paper 1:

- What is the relevance of Honneth's theory of recognition for sport?

Paper 2:

- What is the potential of sport in providing recognition in the form of love?

Paper 3:

- What is the potential of sport in providing recognition in the form of rights?

Paper 4:

- What is the potential of sport in providing recognition in the form of solidarity?

### **Structure of the thesis**

In Chapter 2, Honneth's theory of recognition is presented and outlined. His social philosophical theory is placed within the tradition of Critical Theory, a term usually attached to The Frankfurt School. His theory is presented as being in line with this tradition, but also developing it. Honneth's theory is the main framework for the thesis. In Chapter 3, the methodology of the study and its analysis are outlined. Honneth's 'empirically grounded phenomenology' is presented and reviewed as to how it is applied in the papers. Issues relating to case studies and text sources are discussed with emphasis on how the methods have been applied in this thesis. My own role as a researcher as well as ethical considerations is also presented. In Chapter 4 the results of my thesis are presented as a summary of each paper. An overall discussion on whether and if the main research question has been answered appropriately follows the presentations. Conclusions and final remarks are found in the last chapter, Chapter 5.



## **CHAPTER 2 –ETHICS IN SPORT AND HONNETH’S THEORY OF RECOGNITION**

### **The development of the philosophy and ethics of sport**

Philosophy and ethics of sport is a relatively new field of study. Although sport and athletic contest has been a theme of discussion for many philosophers from ancient times up to the present day, among them Plato, Hobbes and Nietzsche, it was used as an illustration of general points, not as a domain of its own (Torres, 2014). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an early and important contribution to the field of sport, play and games was Huizinga’s (1934, 1955) *Homo ludens: a study of the play element in culture*, but philosophy of sport did not emerge as an academic field until the post-war period (Loland & McNamee, 2014). Works in Europe and the United States by, among others, Weiss (1969) and Metheny (1965), established the field as a sub-discipline of philosophy, and by the late 1960s it had developed into an independent field of study (Loland & McNamee, 2014). In 1972, the Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport (PSSS) was established, and, from 1974, a journal dedicated solely to the philosophy of sport, *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, was published. Former editors Bill Morgan and Klaus Meier collected many of the best early articles in two editions (1988, 1995).

The first years of the field were dominated by conceptual, definitional and aesthetic enquiries, but during the 1980s there was a gradual shift towards ethical analysis of sport. Today, the field of sport philosophy is concerned with the various fields of philosophy, such as ontology, epistemology, ethics and aesthetics (Morgan & Meier, 1995). Mike McNamee views philosophy of sport to be concerned with:

(...) the conceptual analysis and interrogation of key ideas and issues of sports and related practices. At its most general level, it is concerned with articulation the nature and purposes of sport. The philosophy of sport not only gathers insights from the various fields of philosophy as they open up our appreciation of sports practices and institutions, but also generates substantive and comprehensive views of sport itself. The philosophy of sport is never fixed; its methods require of practitioners an inherently self-critical conception of intellectual activity, one that is continuously challenging its own preconceptions and guiding principles both as to the nature and purposes of philosophy and of sports (McNamee, cited in Torres, 2014, p. 5).

Fraleigh (1998) presents four themes that form the basis of enquiries in the ethics of sport: the possibility of a common morality; the desirability of a common morality; does sport (properly understood) constitute a moral practice that contributes to moral education; and can moral rules/principles provide the full content of sports ethics?

As such, my project can be viewed as part of the enquiry into whether sport can constitute a moral practice that contributes to moral education. Within Honneth's framework, moral education, or, rather, moral development must be understood as striving towards the formation of autonomous individuals with possibilities for self-realization.

### **Ethical theories of sport**

My thesis is a normative evaluation of a social practice, sport. MacIntyre (1984) distinguishes between practices and institutions: 'Chess, physics and medicine are practices; chess clubs, laboratories, universities and hospitals are institutions' (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 194). While institutions are a form of organizing the central tasks of a society (Giddens, 1984), practices can be more or less important for the society as a whole, whereas all social practices have certain common traits in that they contain elements of knowledge, tradition and constitute meaning (Schatzki, 2005). Morgan (1994) states that sports are social rather than natural phenomenon. It follows that sports are embedded in and influenced by a larger context: 'Moreover, activities we refer to as 'sport' develop, change, and sometimes vanish in relation to social and cultural context of which they are parts' (Loland, 2002, p.1).

While institutions and practices can have a tradition, be well established and legal, these factors give no guarantee that those practices take necessary ethical concerns into regard. When social practices challenge established norms and values of society, that is, in what can be referred to as ethical dilemmas where we are not sure of what is right and wrong, good and bad, ethical theories become useful. Ethical theories can provide views of society that aim to distance us from the limitations of our emotions and/or the tradition and/or religion we are part of (Føllesdal, 1998). Theories should give a foundation for identifying and evaluating moral dilemmas as well as the involved parties. Ethical theories present the possibility of viewing institutions and practices from a new perspective in that they facilitate the identification of normative problems we otherwise would have overlooked.

There are a number of ethical theories that could have been relevant for this study of sport. Loland & McNamee (2014) point out three main approaches, two modern and one ancient, which have dominated the studies of ethics of sport. While deontology or consequentialism has been dominant in modern moral philosophy, the last 20 years have seen a revival of virtue ethics both within ethics as a general subject and ethics of sport. Deontology is the classical theory of right action (from the Greek word *deon*: duty). Deontological theories seek to establish what is morally right independent of what is good, founded on the thought that we have certain duties to each other. The duties are founded in a super-rule demanding respect for each person's inherent value and need to be considered before actions (Loland & McNamee, 2014). Within the philosophy of sport, Fraleigh's *Right actions in sport: ethics for contestants* (1984) is an example of deontological ethics, as well as Loland's (2002) deontological approach built on Rawls's social contract theory.

Consequentialism is a teleological theory (from the Greek word *telos*, which can be translated as purpose/nature). The criterion of right action within consequentialism is whether it promotes the best consequences (Loland & McNamee, 2014). Utilitarianism is the main strand within consequentialism and is generally based on maximizing total utility or good. Tännsjö (1998) and Tamburrini (1998) have conducted ethical analyses based on utilitarian theory on, respectively, the value of elite sport in society, and on doping.

The revival of virtue ethics instigated by Alasdair Macintyre's *After Virtue* (1984) has also influenced the ethics of sport. Aristotle saw the purpose (*telos*) of human life as seeking a good life for man, that is, a life where the distinguishing human abilities were used in the best way (according to virtue). Within the ethics of sport Feezell (2006), McNamee (2008) and Reid (2010) have conducted ethical analyses based on virtue ethics. As mentioned in the introduction, this project started off with a neo-Aristotelian approach. While Nussbaum's approach resonated with many of my own intuitions as a researcher, it still seemed to be an instance of measuring sport against an external ideal. Being presented with Honneth's theory provided an anchoring within sport as the outset of a critique and analysis as well as a new and relevant perspective on sport and why it matters. Morgan's social philosophical approach to sport in *Leftist theories of sport: a critique and reconstruction* (1994) proposes a reconstructed critical theory of sport. As such, this thesis is inspired by Morgan's project.

## **Contextualizing Honneth's theory of recognition**

Viewed as one of his main works and now a classical text (Brink and Owen, 2007), *The struggle for recognition. The moral grammar of social conflicts* (1995b) by Axel Honneth is the central theoretical starting point for this thesis. In order to gain a deeper understanding of Honneth's theory and his concepts, it is important to place him within the context of the philosophical tradition of which he is a part.

Axel Honneth has, since 2001, been the director of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. The Institute for Social Research is home of the so-called 'Frankfurt School' or 'Critical Theory', a name applied to the school of thought originating from the philosophers and social scientists attached to the Institute in the mid-war era (Lysaker, 2011). The Frankfurt School is usually thought of as having gone through three successive stages: the 'first generation' is represented by, among others, Horkheimer and Adorno, the 'second generation' represented by Habermas, and the 'third generation' in which Honneth can be seen as the central figure (Johansen, 2012). Honneth is seen to have renewed critical theory and social philosophy with the third generation programme he has developed over the last 20 years (Brink and Owen, 2007).

Horkheimer, the first generation of The Frankfurt School, saw the normative task of critical theory to be emancipation in that it had to contribute to a 'society of free individuals' (Horkheimer cited in Pedersen, 2012, p. 3). Critical theory therefore had to be both normative *and* descriptive. It had to cooperate with social sciences and learn from them but not merge with them because the normative ambition had to be maintained. Horkheimer was critical of theories of social philosophy detached from empirical research and saw it as a necessity for philosophical problems to be empirically testable, otherwise they would be 'pseudo-problems' (Pedersen, 2012, p. 4). The aim for social philosophy was that it should provide an interdisciplinary and empirically based critique of ideology and society without giving up the belief in rationality. However, with the *Dialectic of enlightenment* (1944) written together with Adorno, Horkheimer abandons his initial ambition for social philosophy. This move has been criticized by Honneth. Instead of moving towards interdisciplinary social research, Horkheimer and Adorno returned Critical Theory to 'the sphere of a philosophically self-contained theory' (Honneth, 1995a, p. 76).

The most prominent representative of the second generation is Habermas. His theoretical approach can be viewed as a revival of Horkheimer and Adorno's abandoned project of finding a normative foundation for Critical Theory (Pedersen, 2012). Honneth sees Habermas's 'communicative transformation' of Critical Theory as a first step in the attempt to gain access to 'a prescientific realm of moral critique' (Honneth, 1995a, p. xiii). Through his universal pragmatics and the belief that implicit norms of action are embedded in our communication, Habermas turns from the 'paradigm of production', represented by Horkheimer and Adorno to a 'paradigm of communication' (Honneth, 1995a, p. xiii).

Honneth views universal pragmatics as a good but unsuccessful attempt at establishing the normative foundation for a critical theory of society. Habermas's understanding of autonomy is too abstract and too formal to explain how human autonomy is embedded in everyday social practices:

It appeared to me that this approach results in a split between the level of moral-theoretic statements and that of our everyday moral experiences which could only prove detrimental for the empirical intentions of a critical theory of society (Honneth, 1995a, p. xiii).

In line with the initial ambition of Critical Theory, Honneth seeks to establish a framework for analysing social domination as well as 'identifying the social resources for its practical transformation' (Honneth, 1995a, p. xiii). Honneth is not content with a theory that only provides a diagnosis of the negative aspects of social reality. His ambition is to articulate a theory that can identify conditions for individual self-realization (Anderson, 1995). For Honneth, self-realization is contingent on relationships of mutual recognition that enable identity-formation and autonomy, and he also seeks to revive Critical Theory with an empirical anchoring (Honneth, 1995a). Honneth's theory coincides with Habermas's project in that they both believe in universal, normative standards that can be realized through political or social claims. However, Honneth considers these claims for justice to be anchored empirically in concrete experiences of disrespect, not in ideals of communication (Bugge, Sundstøl Eriksen, and Rønningen, 2009).

Honneth situates his writings in a more extensive, philosophical context as well. The foundation of modern social philosophy, among them the works of Hobbes and Machiavelli,

had an atomistic approach to human beings, where the ‘struggle for self-preservation’ describes human life (Honneth, 1995b, p. 7). The focus for political practice, therefore, is to control the sources of struggle. Honneth disagrees with the Hobbesian ontology that interprets human agency as atomistic and instrumentally orientated (Brink and Owen, 2007). He views human beings as inherently social beings dependent upon and striving towards social interaction in order to establish and maintain identity and autonomy. Honneth therefore seeks a description of human agency that is constituted and maintained through intersubjective relationships (Brink and Owen, 2007). The onset of such a description is found in Hegel’s early Jena writings. Hegel views social struggles as based on moral claims to establish conditions that safeguard ‘an undistorted identity formation’ (Honneth, 1995a, p. xv). Drawing on Hegel, Honneth views social struggles as being motivated by struggles for recognition. Social injustice is seen as a lack of recognition, and recognition is a precondition for establishing personal identity, autonomy and self-realization.

Honneth takes from Hegel the idea that full human flourishing is dependent on the existence of well established ‘ethical’ relations – in particular, relations of love, law and ‘ethical life’ (*Sittlichkeit*) – which can only be established through a conflict-ridden developmental process, specifically, through a struggle for recognition. (Anderson, 1995, p. xi)

But Honneth seeks a further, empirical anchoring of his reconstruction of Hegel’s thoughts on recognition. To identify the conditions for identity and autonomy as well as self-realization, Honneth seeks support in empirical work within psychology, sociology and history. Here, he finds support for his assumptions on three forms of intersubjective recognition: love, rights and solidarity (Honneth, 1995b).

Honneth’s theory of recognition has been developed through an inquiry into both traditional and contemporary philosophy (Honneth, 1995a). This is apparent in *The Struggle for recognition* (1995b) but even more so from his *Fragmented world of the social: essays in social and political philosophy* (1995a). In line with Kant, Habermas and Rawls, Honneth views individual autonomy as a legitimate source to social claims in ‘practices of public moral reasoning’ (Brink and Owen, 2007, p. 6). However, Honneth (1995a) regards these philosophers as providing too narrow and abstract an understanding of autonomy because it is not anchored in a real-life setting. Brink and Owen (2007) point out that Honneth’s focus is

on the social preconditions for autonomy, i.e., how autonomy can be realized in reality rather than on the moral-cognitive conditions for autonomy – i.e. autonomy “in theory”.

(...)the development and realization of individual autonomy is in a certain sense only possible when subjects have the social preconditions for realizing their life goals without unjustifiable disadvantages and with the greatest possible freedom (Honneth, in Fraser and Honneth, 2003 p. 259).

As emphasised above, Honneth’s theory is also connected to Horkheimer and Adorno’s work, and, in addition, to Foucault’s studies of disciplining practices and Taylor’s insights into recognition. The common ambition for all these theories is to explore which social conditions pose a hindrance to individual autonomy (Brink and Owen, 2007; Honneth, 1995a).

Individual autonomy is at the centre, not as a given state, but, rather, one that is achieved through struggle. In other words, these views of individual autonomy seek to pinpoint which aspects of society lead to alienation or are disciplining (Brink and Owen, 2007).

### **Honneth’s theory of recognition**

Honneth (1995b) argues that social conflict is and should be motivated by struggles for recognition. His theory opens up the possibility of interpreting social struggles as claims to recognition, where legitimate struggles for recognition are moral claims trying to rectify social injustice and disrespect (Honneth, 1995b). To individuals, receiving recognition in three forms, love, rights and solidarity, is vital for developing basic self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. These three modes of ‘practical relation-to-self’ are essential for identity-formation and autonomy, as well as being prerequisites for self-realization (Honneth, 1995b, p.129). Receiving love, rights and solidarity depends upon relationships of mutual recognition, that is, inclusion in society through reciprocal relationships:

The possibility for sensing, interpreting, and realizing one’s needs and desires as a fully autonomous and individuated person – in short, the very possibility of identity-formation – depends crucially on the development of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. These three modes of relating practically to oneself can only be acquired and maintained intersubjectively, through being granted recognition by others whom one also recognizes. As a

result the conditions for self-realization turn out to be dependent on the establishment of mutual recognition (Anderson, 1995, p. xi).

To be recognized is, therefore, a fundamental human need, vital for both identity-formation and autonomy, for self-realization and for the possibility of establishing and maintaining relationships. The forms of recognition are identified through struggles for recognition; this negative process makes recognition visible in that violations or disrespect illuminate both what recognition is and the potential for recognition within a sphere of society.

Recognition is viewed as a universal fundamental human need (Pedersen, 2012). It is a psychological need (in order to value oneself, one needs to be valued), but it is also contingent on intersubjectivity: it has to be mutual. The concept of recognition therefore entails both a 'fundamental anthropological need and a normative expectation' tied to the formation and maintenance of intersubjective relationships (Lysaker, 2011, p.107, my translation). Social struggles can therefore be interpreted as claims on fairness and justice that stem from phenomenological experiences of disrespect or violations (Bugge, Sundstøl Eriksen and Rønningen, 2009). The identification of the three forms of recognition, love, rights and solidarity, is accomplished through a negative process because recognition is made visible and pronounced when it is violated or disrespected (Lysaker, 2008; 2013). Each form of recognition is set within different spheres of society, forming 'patterns of recognition' distinctive for that sphere (Honneth, 1995b, p. 95). Love is found in the private sphere, solidarity in civil society and rights within the national state. The forms of intersubjective recognition contribute to the formation of three modes of practical relation-to-self: love is the foundation for acquiring and maintaining basic self-confidence, receiving solidarity is vital for forming and maintaining self-esteem, and receiving rights is essential for forming self-respect (Honneth, 1995b).

Struggles for recognition strive to re-establish a positive relation to self, other members of society and/or societal institutions (Lysaker, 2011). By viewing the process as a struggle, disrespect becomes an indicator of morally problematic treatment of persons. Participants in society have legitimate, normative expectations to receive love, rights and solidarity. These patterns of recognition contain a specific potential for moral development and for developing



a certain relation to self. The spheres also define the roles the subject is expected to fulfil as a participant in society.

The forms of recognition are, in sum, what constitute sufficient recognition (a minimum demand) for identity-formation (Anderson, 1995). Honneth describes recognition as a fundamental human need. The development of rights and solidarity as separate spheres of recognition is contextualized within the historic development of modern democratic states where a prémodern concept of honour was divided into a 'universalistic moral element and a meritocratic element' (Honneth, 2002, p.501).

In later years, Honneth himself as well as others have pointed out the tension in his earliest writings between the description of recognition both as a universal, anthropological human need and as contingent on context (Honneth, 2002; Pedersen 2012). Pedersen (2012, p.14) points out that Honneth, although aware of the tension, '...does not want to accept that there is a choice between universalism and contextualism'. While this is an important development in Honneth's theory, I have chosen to focus on the earliest version of the theory presented in *The struggle for recognition* (1995b) and will not go into this debate to any extent.

### **Love**

Love is seen as an emotional relationship between significant others. Honneth stresses the need for defining love in a neutral way; it includes all relationships towards significant others where the subjects recognize the other as a being with needs and feelings. Love is an appreciation of the other person existing and being in one's life and is, therefore, by nature, restricted to a limited number of partners in interaction and tied to our primary social relationships: relationships between family members (a particular focus is the relationship between parent and child), friendships and intimate relationships of love (Honneth, 1995b).

Love relationships are to be understood here as referring to primary relationships in so far as they – on the model of friendships, parent-child relationships as well as erotic relationship between lovers – are constituted by strong emotional attachments among a small number of people (Honneth, 1995b, p. 95).

Our role in society where we receive and give love is as private persons, and the sphere of society containing this relation of recognition is the private sphere. Love forms a foundation in our development towards being moral subjects and this pattern of recognition is independent of historical or social contexts: the need for love as well as the notion of bodily integrity 'cuts across differences of cultural and historical contexts' (Anderson, 1995, p. xiv).

Receiving love is essential for forming basic self-confidence and for being able to form trusting relationships with other persons. Basic self-confidence is viewed as bodily integrity and a positive understanding of self (Lysaker, 2011). Honneth draws on the work of psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott to explain how deep, emotional bonds are created through infancy between mother and child, and how a process of detachment, if successful, will result in that child developing a sense of trust in its own body.

While the relationship between primary care giver and child is prior to any other form of recognition and is vital for establishing a basic self-confidence, the maintenance of basic self-confidence is dependent on relationships of love where this first interchange between ego-demarcation and ego-dissolution is reproduced (Brink and Owen, 2007). The positive self-relation established through love can be damaged if a person is subjected to physical or psychological violation such as rape, torture or abuse. The violation/disrespect lies, not just in the pain experienced but, in the person's lack of control over her body. Therefore, this form of disrespect is the most severe in that it does not just affect a person's normative understanding of self and relationships towards other people (as do the other two categories of recognition) but can impart a 'loss of self' both in a physical and psychological sense.

### **Honneth on play**

Another result of the process of secession is *play*. Winnicott suggests that for a child to develop into an autonomous physical being, it has to go through a phase of secession where both mother and child seek to remove themselves from the initial symbiosis, but where the mother still provides the child with recognition (Honneth, 1995b). This first and definitive secession is never really completed. It is, instead, with the help of transitional objects (objects of affection, such as cuddly toys), substituted by an area of experience or knowledge that helps the child with coping with the secession.

Honneth does not discuss the play element further, but his outline of play is discussed and elaborated in my article on love, 'Is there a place for love in sport? Reflections based on a case study from boxing' (Andersen, unpublished). My thesis will be that a successful process of secession has two parallel results: trust in others affirming recognition of needs and desires and basic self-confidence, and an ability to play.

### **Rights**

Rights are the individual claims a person can legitimately expect society to fulfil, since, as a member of the community, he or she has an equal right to participate in its institutional order. Rights are the institutionalized form of respect between subjects: respect entailing the intersubjective recognition of features as a generalized other – as 'morally accountable and equal individuals' (Pedersen, 2012, p. 13). Recognition as rights entails a mutual recognition among persons of each other as rational and responsible agents with an equal right to take part in the public formation and development of their community. The individual inhabits the necessary criteria for participation in what Habermas calls a community's 'discursive will formation' (Anderson, 1995, p. xv). To Honneth, recognition in terms of rights is crucial for the development of self-respect and respect for other persons.

Disrespect within rights is when a subject is structurally excluded from receiving certain rights within a society. A denial of rights implies that the person is not deemed to possess the same degree of moral accountability as other members of society. A society's deprivation or denial of rights can lead to the person's loss of self-respect because the person is not recognized as an equal partner within the law. This also influences in negative ways the person's respect for other members of society (Lysaker, 2011).

Honneth does not claim that our self-respect is totally dependent on receiving legal rights; it is, rather, that legal rights are a necessity for full autonomous agency.

The recognition of rights is the general form because it entails the recognition of the subject as a generalised being who exhibits the necessary criteria (moral accountability) for participation in society's formation of will, for example, by having the right to vote. This form of recognition strives towards a level of universalized respect (Honneth, 1995b).

Traditionally, recognition in the form of rights was closely connected to social recognition or status, but historical development in Western societies has divided these two forms into one more general form of recognition: the institution of rights and one individual form of recognition, solidarity. Solidarity is the individual counterpart of rights. Where rights are directed towards a universalized and generalized other, solidarity is the recognition of the individual as someone unique and special; it is oriented 'towards the capacities developed by the individual in the course of his or her life' (Honneth, 1995b, p. 125). Individuals have acquired knowledge of what it entails to recognise each other in accordance with different aspects of individuality and agency.

### **Solidarity**

Solidarity is social appraisal which allows the subject to relate positively to his/her personal skills and abilities and to recognize another person's skills and abilities (Honneth, 1995b). The social sphere of solidarity is civil society, and disrespect expresses itself as the devaluation or marginalization of individual or collective lifestyles. The social status of a person can be understood as the degree of social acceptance a project of self-realization has in society (Honneth, 1995b; 2007). If a person's lifestyle is deemed inferior, it robs her of the opportunity to accord social value to her abilities. As a result, she can experience a loss of self-esteem in not being able to view herself as exhibiting traits and abilities worthy of esteem. Honneth sees this form of recognition as important to preserve and expand a positive relation to self; this is the sphere where we are given recognition as individuals as opposed to the recognition of rights. Social appraisal is a re-enactment and expansion of the experience of our traits and abilities being appreciated (hopefully) in our childhood by our closest care givers.

The experience that one's own needs, judgement and, above all, skills are regarded as valuable is one that subjects must constantly renew and re-concretize so that they do not lose their strength and vitality in the anonymity of a generalized other (Honneth, 2012, p. 205).

While rights are appraisals of the traits the subject shares with other members of society, social appraisal is given to the traits and abilities that are special to a person – those traits that mark individuality (Honneth, 1995b). Being valued in this way has an effect on the subject's

practical relation to self. We are being recognized and give recognition for the skills and abilities that we are born with or have developed through life; these are the distinguishing marks of individuals. Recognition and self-realization in this area might, therefore, be said to represent the ultimate expression of individual freedom.

Because it is individual in its form, the appreciation of skills and abilities is not available to all. Various skills and abilities are not all shared human traits but contribute to a shared horizon of values within a group or a community (Honneth, 1995b): the more diversified the pool of skills, abilities and unique traits, the more personal traits and skills will be recognized and the more room for self-realization/individualization. Honneth labels this as a 'post-traditional' form of solidarity, meaning this to be when all or most members of society can be given social appraisal for their skills and abilities and thereby establish and maintain their self-esteem (Honneth, 1995b, p. 179). Social status and respect are no longer distributed to the subject (mainly) because of her participating in a collective activity, but are given because of individual achievement within a recognized practice. This presupposes that social relations are characterized by symmetrical appreciation between subjects that are both autonomous and individualized (Honneth, 1995b). The subjects share certain values that make each subject's skills and abilities seem meaningful to their shared practice.

## **Summary**

According to Honneth, modern ethical agency, that is, establishing and maintaining personal identity and autonomy, demands the formation of certain 'practical relations-to-self' (Honneth, 1995b, p. 129). These relations-to-self are formed by receiving three forms of recognition within three different spheres: love within close relationships, rights as a citizen and solidarity within civil society. Recognition in the form of love is the foundation for forming basic self-confidence, recognition in the form of rights is vital for establishing self-respect, and recognition in the form of solidarity is vital for establishing self-esteem. To be recognized is therefore a fundamental human need, vital in order to establish personal identity and to enable self-realization and participation in society. Lack of recognition or disrespect can be experienced as a damage or injustice that, under favourable social conditions, can motivate a struggle for recognition.

### **CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY**

As the sections on case studies and source criticism will show, this thesis, as a normative research project, builds on philosophical methodology and practical reasoning. The section on Honneth's 'empirically grounded phenomenology' shows that it is based on a mixture of several sources: human experience and relevant forms of empirical research as well as normative theory. It might seem that, by not applying these methods in full, one is taking shortcuts in the research process and that 'normative' and 'scientific knowledge' might not be compatible terms.

Von Wright (1971) outlines two traditions on scientific explanation and knowledge; one is the 'Galilean' tradition, the other the 'Aristotelian' tradition. The Aristotelian tradition is rooted in the understanding of science stemming from antiquity, where scientific explanation sought to explain facts or phenomena according to an overriding purpose or goal. The Galilean tradition runs parallel to the development of modern, natural sciences and the industrial revolution, and is based on causal explanations. The scientific revolution and the resulting advance of natural sciences entailed great progress within medical science, biology etc. This led to the method of natural sciences being viewed as a model for all scientific knowledge. Positivism, a strand of thought within the Galilean tradition, holds forth three ideals for scientific explanations: methodical monism, mathematical physics and causal explanation. Methodical monism entails an ideal of one method for all sciences; somewhat flippantly put, it can be said to be a version of 'one size fits all' for scientific research. The second ideal is that scientific explanations should aim towards exactness of explanations in mathematical physics, or the structure and coherence they entail. The third ideal, causal explanation, requires that instances can be subsumed under hypothesis of general natural laws (Von Wright, 1971). Positivism expresses a belief in science as an objective and detached activity. It indicates that knowledge can be gained by objective methods, and, thus, scientific knowledge is purer than other forms of knowledge because it is seen as objective and true.

A different view, more in line with the Aristotelian tradition, is presented by Evers (1991) and Leer-Salvesen (2011). In *Plurality of thought*, Evers (1991) uses a very broad definition of science, in that she argues that the concept allows, but does not necessitate a search for practical, empirical experiments and rather underlines a certain necessary, minimum degree of cognitive or theoretical elaboration and sophistication. It follows that 'reality' is not an

objective standard to be gained and measured only by certain methods but can also be studied as experienced and lived. Evers views moral philosophy and general philosophy as science. In line with the Evers argument Leer-Salvesen claims that most scientists today recognize moral philosophy as a normative science (Leer-Salvesen, 2011). For moral philosophy to be a part of the scientific project it has to be 1) critical, and 2) testable, transparent and open to counter-arguments (Leer-Salvesen, 2011). In other words, moral philosophy must strive towards the same standards for research as science in general.

Torbjørn Tännsjö (2007) points to scientific and moral questions as essentially different and claims that moral philosophy entails *more* than descriptive sciences do. Nevertheless, the intellectual demands of moral reasoning are as strict as those of scientific reasoning (Tännsjö, 2007).

### **Empirically grounded phenomenology**

Some of the fascination for Honneth's theory, when it was first presented to me, was that it provided a foothold within social practice in taking as the starting point of analysis a lived experience of violation or disrespect. As will be further elucidated in Chapter 3, this is a feature of the tradition within which Honneth situates his project, Critical Theory (Petherbridge, 2011; Honneth, 1995a). As shown in Chapter 2, Critical Theory has two fundamental, methodological elements: it requires an instance of experienced violation or disrespect that reveals injustice, and it requires a normative theory that provides a context-transcending tool to assess the lived experience:

Critical Theory must therefore consist of two fundamental elements: both a pre-theoretical resource or empirical foothold in social reality which reveals an emancipatory instance or need, but also a quasi-transcendental dimension or mode of context-transcending validity in order to provide a normative horizon from which to critically assess forms of social organisation (Petherbridge, 2011, p. 1).

In Honneth's case, these fundamental elements appear in forms of disrespect and recognition: phenomenological instances of disrespect or violation are the pre-theoretical resources leading to an investigation into whether these instances indeed reveal emancipatory needs, and the

theory of recognition provides the normative horizon that makes it possible to assess these claims.

This approach forms a method of ‘empirically grounded phenomenology’ (Honneth, 1995b, p. 162), which gives a three-step approach to a philosophical and critical examination of emancipatory instances. The starting point is a case of phenomenological experience(s) of violation or disrespect. They are what gives the method its phenomenological input and are essential because they root normative claims in everyday experience. Honneth does not give these experiences of disrespect normative precedence, since human beings can feel disrespectfully treated unwarrantedly (Lysaker, 2008). For the normative claims to have validity they have to be confirmed by systematic and critical reason and, if possible, by empirical sciences. Honneth himself applies empirical knowledge from psychology, sociology and history in order to assess claims (Honneth, 1995b). The last step is a critical, normative examination of and reflection upon the phenomenological and empirical input, where the theory of recognition provides the stance of evaluation.

The method of empirically grounded phenomenology has been applied throughout the papers, albeit with some difference in how meticulous the application has been. In the first paper, ‘Love, rights and solidarity: sport’s potential for recognition’ (Andersen, 2015), a first attempt is made to apply Honneth’s theory and method to sport. The phenomenological cases are not being supported by empirical research or being given a thorough critical assessment. The aim of this first paper was rather to ‘survey the ground’ in order to see whether there was a possibility of finding all three forms of recognition in sport. The phenomenological input was used in slightly revised forms in the later papers and will be discussed in the following sections.

The second paper, ‘Is there a place for love in sport. Reflections based on a case study from boxing’ (Andersen, unpublished), is chronologically the last paper to be written. The phenomenological input is the case of Norwegian boxer Richard Kiwanuka, who experienced extreme violation at an early age when his family was killed and he was taken to become a child soldier. The case is viewed as an instance of violation where love in sport might rectify the damage done. The concept of love within the theory of recognition is outlined, as well as the concept of play. An argument is made for play in sport having the effect of establishing a



sphere of recognition providing care and trust and restoring or forming a self-relation equal to the self-relation established by recognition in the form of love. The empirical research supplied is Loïc Wacquant's sociological studies on boxing (Wacquant 1992). The normative dimension is Honneth's theory of recognition and a normative perspective on sport, provided by Loland (2002). The discussion also rests on philosophical perspectives on the conditions for sport to realize an element of play (Guttmann, 1978; Suits, 1988) as well as Lewandowski's perspective on optimal constraints in boxing (2007).

The third paper, 'Jumping for recognition: women's ski jumping viewed as a struggle for rights' (Andersen & Loland, 2016), finds its phenomenological starting point in the history of women ski jumpers and the long struggle for participation in the sport. The concept of rights within the theory of recognition is then outlined and the case of women jumpers discussed as to whether this case really is an instance of disrespect of rights. The empirical research used to generalize and support the discussion comes from the sociology of sport. Methodologically, empirical research from both history and sociology was vital to illuminate the longevity of the struggle for recognition with its starting point at the very outset of ski jumping as a modern sport. Honneth's theory of recognition is the main normative dimension, but it is supplied by theories in sports ethics (Loland, 2002; Loland and McNamee, 2000).

The fourth paper, 'Sport and the obligation of solidarity' (Andersen & Loland, 2015), takes as its starting point the case of Michelle Dumaresq, a Canadian downhill mountain biker who was born a man, but changed her sex. The main phenomenological input was a documentary on Dumaresq (Duthie, 2004) and a blog-entry (Dumaresq, 2014). The concept of solidarity within the theory of recognition was presented, and it was then discussed whether this instance was an instance of disrespect of solidarity. The empirical input is mainly provided by natural sciences in order to illuminate relevant (and irrelevant) biological differences between the sexes and the performance demands of downhill mountain biking. Also, here, the normative horizon is supplied by Honneth's theory of recognition (1995b) and by Loland's theory of fair play (2002).

### **My own role**

Transparency is an ideal and an obligation within research, and so I will outline the reasoning that led to the theoretical approach of this thesis, as well as positioning myself as a researcher.

Choosing a theoretical perspective involves exactly that: a choice. As such, the choice is not random; it says something about both the researcher's perspective on the world and what sort of paradigm the researcher works within. In 'Fragments: Living with Other People's Lives as Analytic Practice', Smart (2014) discusses how a social researcher needs to develop her sensibilities. This requires, according to Smart, a certain form of attentiveness. Throughout a career as a researcher and actively listening to people's stories, one can develop an understanding of other people's lives, not through sharing their experience but through acquiring a form of sensibility towards shared features of people's stories.

For some years I worked as a police woman. Hoel (2011) shows that police work, to a large extent, consists of meeting people who are vulnerable and in difficult situations and views practical knowledge of an experienced police person to be a form of lived or embodied knowledge that is hard to capture in words but seems to give a certain sensibility towards instances of disrespect.

One of the main ambitions in Honneth's work is the protection of those who are vulnerable. Honneth's theory of recognition correlated with my personal view of the world. Although a police person's 'cargo of knowledge' (Smart, 2014, p. 132), being focused on individual situations instead of a broader picture of society, is different from that of a researcher, it has, nevertheless, formed my outlook on the world. As opposed to a subjective view founded in personal experience, a theory tries to synthesize and generalize, thereby redirecting the perspective from a subjective to a (more) objective one (Hospers, 1990; Putnam, 1991). It is the aim of my work as a researcher that this thesis should represent a generalized and synthesized stance on recognition in sport. The thesis will nevertheless bear the influence of my interpretations of the reality presented by available sources based on my background and experiences.

## **The research process**

The aim of the study has been to find out if and eventually why sport morally matters. More specifically:

*What is the potential of sport as a sphere for recognition?*

Even more specifically, the aim has been to enquire whether sport has the potential for recognition in the forms of, respectively, love, rights and solidarity, and, if so, how these forms are present.

Posing *how* and *why* questions imply a focus on contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts. Here, then, case studies are generally the preferred method (Yin, 2014). Within case study research it is common to distinguish between instrumental and intrinsic case studies (Stake, 2005). An instrumental case study seeks to provide insight into an issue or build theory, while an intrinsic case study seeks to provide knowledge of a unique case (and what this uniqueness consists of) rather than to generalize or build theory (Stake, 2005). All three cases in this thesis are instrumental case studies seeking to identify how instances of disrespect might point towards a potential for a specific form of recognition within sport.

The case studies in the papers are not the result of my own empirical work but form the summing up – the interpretation – of phenomenological instances confirmed by empirical research. This is in line with Honneth's empirically grounded phenomenology (1995b). Rather than applying case studies as an empirical research method, the method used is a practical, ethical method or form of argumentation.

This study reports three individual cases that are discussed as to whether they are legitimate cases of struggles for recognition:

For Honneth, social domination can only be adequately critiqued if we begin from the experience of injustice, that is, normativity can only be derived negatively, not on the basis of ideality (Petherbridge, 2011, p. 18).

The aim of case studies as a method, in line with Honneth's method, has been to provide insight into issues of recognition by discussing individual cases as instances of lack thereof.

### **Text sources**

The portrayal of cases in this thesis rests upon different types of text material ranging from academic articles and books to newspaper articles and film. The sources have been journalists, academics and the individuals themselves: Richard Kiwanuka, several women ski jumpers (in the VANOC case), among them Annette Sagen, and the downhill cyclist, Michelle Dumaresq. Source criticism is an important method within historical research and a subject of study in its own right. I have not used the full method of source criticism but rest my interpretation and presentation of the cases on a simpler form of criticism by focusing on two main questions. The first is the identity/identities behind the source; the second is how credible their statements are. Personal statements, as expressed by Kiwanuka and Sagen in interviews and Dumaresq on film and in blog, are substantiated by the interpretation effected by journalists and/or researchers.

The presentation and interpretation of the case of Richard Kiwanuka rests on a summing up of different news articles and interviews where Kiwanuka tells his story, the main sources being Stokke (2013) and Sunnanå (2013). Sunnanå is a journalist within the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), a public broadcaster. Stokke is a journalist for *Aftenposten*, one of Norway's largest daily newspapers.

The presentation and interpretation of the case of women ski jumpers and their fight for participation in the sport rests on academic, historical and sociological sources. Sagen's feelings on the treatment of women jumpers were expressed in one of the main daily newspapers in Norway, *Dagbladet* (Sæther, 2004). Johanna Kolstad's reaction to exclusion from competitive ski jumping was discussed by her descendants in an article in *Digitalt Museum*<sup>3</sup> (Aastad Bråten, Aastad Bråten and Leirhol, 2009). Within Honneth's method and theory, phenomenological feelings of disrespect need to be confirmed by empirical sources (research) – as in this case of women's ski jumping.

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<sup>3</sup> The Digital Museum in Norway (my translation).

The presentation of the case of Michelle Dumaresq rests on Dumaresq's statements in a documentary, '100 % Woman' (Duthie, 2004), made over two years where she is establishing herself first as a national, then as an international competitor within downhill cycling, as well as a blog-entry from Dumaresq (Dumaresq, 2014). The interpretation of the case rests on how it was presented and constructed in different news and magazine articles on downhill biking (Billman 2004; Mountainbike.nl 2002; Reifer 2002; The Vancouver Sun 2006, 03.08). There has also been an academic discussion on how sport should treat the challenges presented by new perspectives on gender (Coggon, Hammond and Holm, 2008; Teetzel, 2013).

These relevant cases have been chosen for (seemingly) representing good examples of instances of disrespect but also because of already being known and discussed within an academic setting and/or within the sport. As such, interpretation does not rest on my understanding alone. The exception is the case of Richard Kiwanuka, which has not been discussed within an academic setting. It should be highlighted, however, that in this discussion, significant academic sources are used to better understand the moral challenges of the sport of boxing.

Summing up, it should be noted that the cases presented are found in relatively reliable sources, but their presentation as 'real' is challenged by a selection of information and interpretation and construction in three levels: by journalists and reporters of the mass media, by researchers and, in this thesis, by me. This does not mean that the portrayal of cases is inaccurate and unreliable, rather that it is subject to various biases. Moreover, this can be defended because the cases are not discussed intrinsically with strong requirements for reliable and valid images of reality, but as examples to be used in a more general discussion of the potential of recognition in sport.

### **Co-authorship**

Two of the four papers in the dissertation have been co-authored. Papers 3 and 4 were written in collaboration with my supervisor, Professor Sigmund Loland. I carried out the data collection and wrote the first draft of the paper, while Sigmund Loland contributed in the conceptualisation and analysis of the paper. I am therefore first author and principally responsible for the result.

### **Ethical considerations**

In this thesis there has been no gathering of sensitive data. The only aspect of the project that can be said to have presented an ethical dilemma is the cases chosen to illustrate phenomenological experiences of disrespect. In identifying and describing someone as a victim of disrespect or violation, there is always a danger of victimizing someone that does not view themselves as such, maybe adding insult to injury. All the cases used have been presented in media and the respective subjects, Dumaresq, the women ski jumpers and Kiwanuka, have all stated that they have been subjected to disrespect influencing their lives and self-relation in different ways. In discussing their cases as I have done in the articles, their very personal life stories are interpreted as phenomenological instances of more generalized problems – they become ‘cases’. In the women ski jumpers’ case, their stories illustrated discrimination against women, Dumaresq’s story became an illustration of sport’s problem with how to include and support transgender persons, and Kiwanuka became a case of trauma and violation disturbing his connection to his own body, his self-confidence and trust in other people.

By using these cases in an instrumental way, I stand in danger of using persons as a means to an end (Ruyter, 2003; The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2006, point 5). In generalizing their experiences, there might be a danger of ‘trivializing’ their experiences – of not being sensitive enough to the particular life story being told and how the story has affected the particular individual. Upon critical reflection, and in discussion with my supervisor, I have concluded that this has not been the case. In all the chosen cases, the individuals seem to have been aware of their treatment representing more general problems of disrespect. The VANOC case was a case of discrimination and was also viewed as such by the Canadian Court. Michelle Dumaresq was aware that her marginalization also presented a societal problem in how transgender persons should be included, even though she did not seek to be a spokesperson for a struggle (Duthie 2004). Kiwanuka has used his experiences with recovering from trauma through sport to promote sport as a means of integration of refugees and immigrants in Norway.

Another ethical dilemma is linked to how the different sporting organizations are presented and viewed (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2006, point 20). In the case of women’s ski jumping, the International Ski Federation (FIS) and the International

Olympic Committee (IOC) and their decisions on women's participation were discussed in critical ways. This, however, is based on the cases being judged as discriminatory by both the Canadian Court and the Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman (LDO.no, 2004). As such, the description of the decisions made in the IOC and the FIS are not just moral judgements, but also official, law bound judgements.

In the case of Michelle Dumaresq, we (Andersen and Loland, 2015) did not criticize the International Cycling Federation (ICF) as such, we just suggested that the inclusion of cases like Dumaresq's might be made easier if the classification system were adjusted. Based on analysis of the ability and skill requirements of downhill cycling, it seemed that gender classification might not be necessary. ICF and the Canadian Cycling Association were adhering to Canadian law and did include Dumaresq. In Dumaresq's case, it was her fellow cyclists whose behaviour presented an ethical problem: Dumaresq was marginalized despite her legal right to compete. In discussing and naming Dumaresq's main adversaries, we pinpoint certain persons, and discuss and make a normative judgement of their behaviour. This is done in an academic setting, not in a newspaper or other media, and as such these cyclists do not have a forum where they are given a chance to respond. By passing a normative judgement on a person's behaviour, they can feel labelled as morally 'bad persons', but the marginalization of Dumaresq took very concrete forms. She was exposed to petitions against her racing (Billman, 2004; Reifer 2002) as well as public statements of non-acceptance of her womanhood, for instance, at an award ceremony where Dumaresq had won, the woman who came second put on a t-shirt naming *her* the '100% Pure Woman Champ 2006' (The Vancouver Sun, 2006.03.08). Both media and academia must be allowed to discuss public statements; they are not private opinions but statements made in public in order to sway or demonstrate an opinion (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2006, point 9 and 11). As such, although a moral judgement may be unwelcome, it is not unwarranted.

## **CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

In chapter 4 I present the results of the study by means of a short summary of each of the four papers. The research questions in the respective articles have been formulated with the intention of exploring the potential for recognition in sport. I have chosen to present the articles in line with Honneth's original sequence of forms of recognition, not in the order in which they have been published. Following these summaries, I discuss the more general main research question posed in Chapter 1: *What is the potential of sport as a sphere for recognition?*

### **The papers**

#### **Paper 1**

Paper 1, 'Love, rights and solidarity: sport's potential for recognition' (Andersen, 2015), is single-authored and gives an overview of sport's potential for recognition. The overriding research question in the paper is: What is the relevance of Honneth's theory of recognition to sport?

While it does not go in depth into the different forms of recognition, it seeks to explore how the respective concepts of love, rights and solidarity can be applied to sport, and what these concepts would then entail. The article departs from a question of what sport can offer us. Are there moral values in sport, and, if so, under what conditions can these values be expressed? Within Honneth's theory these values should be forms of love, rights and solidarity. By using only the first and last step of Honneth's method (the phenomenological input and critical analysis), I make the tentative argument that Honneth's theory is a productive theory for investigating sport. This first application shows that sport has potential for recognition in three different forms: love, solidarity and rights. While this may be true of other practices as well, sport seems to have an especially strong potential in this respect. The aggregated recognition within sport is not just that the three forms can be present, but that at least two of these forms seem to be double-layered: solidarity (both as society's acceptance of sport as a lifestyle and solidarity between athletes) and love (as in play – a "love relationship" with oneself – and as in friendship between athletes).



The conditions where these values can be expressed were found to be conditions where sport can establish a separate sphere, that is, where sport has an element of play. This argument rests on Guttmann (1978) and Suits (1988). The conclusion in the paper is in line with Loland's theory of fair play (2002) in that sports competitions are at their best when performed with a playful attitude. The potential for play seems to be inherent in sport, but this potential is not always realized. The conclusion is that, if practised according to ideals of fair play, sport possesses significant ethical potential in that it can provide three forms of recognition within the sphere of sport.

## **Paper 2**

Paper 2, 'Is there a place for love in sport? Reflections based on a case study from boxing' (Andersen, unpublished), is single-authored. The main research question is whether sport can be a sphere of love. More specifically, the article examines a form of self-love attainable through play stemming from a less intersubjective and emotional source than Honneth's concept of love. If play can contribute to forming relationships of trust and care as well as establishing basic self-confidence, it might be a sphere for recognition in the form of self-love. For sport to be a sphere for recognition in the form of love it has to provide (1) relationships of trust and care and (2) a relationship-to-self that is similar to basic self-confidence.

Play, it is argued, can establish a sphere of recognition in that it forms trusting relationships where the partners in interaction are mutually dependent on each other. It establishes relations of care or instils self-care, and it provides a practical relation-to-self (self-knowledge) that is more embodied and less dependent upon intersubjective recognition than basic self-confidence. The conclusion is that boxing, primarily in the form of sparring, can be a way of gaining recognition in the form of love. This form of recognition provides self-knowledge, trust and care. It is less intersubjective than Honneth's concept of love, and, as such, play can be a sphere for love in the form of self-love. This form of recognition is not to be interpreted in a narcissistic sense but as a deep connection to oneself.

Again, the article is developed with the help of Honneth's method. The phenomenological input is the case of former refugee and boxer, Richard Kiwanuka, who, despite violations that

led to deep traumas, regained his self-confidence and autonomy from boxing. In Honneth's theory, violations within the sphere of love do not have the power to form social struggles for recognition in that this form of recognition and disrespect is deeply personal. A struggle for love is, therefore, a struggle to reconnect or to regain basic self-confidence and re-establish relationships of trust and care. The empirical input is based mainly on Wacquant's sociological research of an inner city boxing gym in Chicago (Wacquant, 1992). Wacquant's work shows that trust in other persons and care for oneself, as well as self-knowledge, are available through boxing. In the critical evaluation, forms of meaning and value in boxing are examined.

### **Paper 3**

Paper 3, 'Jumping for recognition: women's ski jumping viewed as a struggle for rights' (Andersen & Loland, 2016), is co-authored with Sigmund Loland. In this paper the long-standing conflict around women's ski jumping is discussed. The thesis is that the exclusion of women ski jumpers was a violation of each athlete's individual rights and reduced each athlete's potential for developing self-respect. Based on Honneth's theory of recognition, rights were defined as mutual recognition between persons of each other as rational and responsible agents with an equal right to take part in the public formation and development of a common community or practice. In line with Honneth's theory, social struggle is viewed as a struggle for recognition instigated by phenomenological cases of disrespect. The women's ski jumping case is viewed as a 'struggle for recognition'. Our claim in the article is that women ski jumpers were denied inclusion in a sport in which they were entitled to participate. Based on analyses of the social logic of sport we also discuss the more general topic of the potential of sport as a sphere for recognition of rights.

In the article, Honneth's method is applied fully; the phenomenological input is in the form of reports of the experience of exclusion among women ski jumpers. Their experiences show how the exclusion affected these ski jumpers personally. The claims to recognition were supported by empirical input from historical research and social sciences. Finally, a critical, normative examination of the phenomenological and empirical input was carried out. We concluded that women ski jumpers were legitimately entitled to compete as they had actual and/or potential capabilities and skills to contribute in the formation and development

of their sport. Their exclusion was a violation of each athlete's individual rights with potentially destructive effect on the development of their self-respect. At a more general level, we discussed sport as a field for recognition of rights and argued that the basic principles of equal opportunity to take part and to perform make sport a particularly potent sphere for such recognition and also for the identification of rights violations.

#### **Paper 4**

Paper 4, 'Sport and the obligation of solidarity' (Andersen & Loland, 2015), is also co-authored with Sigmund Loland. The research question in this article is whether there is a particular potential for solidarity in sport. We analyse a particular 'struggle for recognition' in the form of lack of solidarity. Honneth's concept of solidarity entails social appraisal or esteem which allows the subject to relate positively to his/her personal skills and abilities and to recognize another person's skills and abilities. Receiving solidarity will lead to establishing self-esteem. Honneth's method is applied fully in the article. The phenomenological input is the case of Michelle Dumaresq, a woman downhill biking champion who was born a man. By not adhering to a traditional perception of womanhood and by being perceived as possessing 'male' bodily traits, Dumaresq was seen to have an unfair advantage by many of her fellow women cyclists. Instead of being included in a sporting community, she experienced marginalization and being considered ineligible to compete. The phenomenological input comes from Dumaresq's and her competitors' views as expressed in a documentary (Duthie, 2004), as well as Dumaresq's experiences of disrespect and how it affected her (Dumaresq, 2014). Her persistence in competing despite marginalization was interpreted as a struggle for recognition, and we sought to analyse the legitimacy of this struggle in the paper.

In the critical evaluation of phenomenological and empirical input we found that Dumaresq's case could, indeed, be viewed as a struggle for recognition, since commonly recognized ideals in sport of mutual respect and inclusion were violated. Based on Honneth's concept of solidarity, we found that realizing the potential of solidarity is facilitated by justice. In the Dumaresq case, classification seemed to be the problem: Dumaresq's competitors perceived the competition as unfair. Our tentative suggestion was to change classification to being based on body mass instead of biological sex. Relevant empirical information is found in studies on the physiological demands of downhill biking as well as physiological research on genetic

inequalities between the sexes to develop performance. This change would to a greater degree meet the principle of equal opportunity, and Dumaresq's performances would be recognized and appreciated as contributions to the shared practice. In our view, this would open up a modified value-horizon among those involved in the downhill cycling society and enhance possibilities for solidarity.

More generally, we argued that, if sports competitions meet requirements on fairness and justice, and if athletes are voluntarily engaged, participation does not just open up but gives rise to obligations of fair play and solidarity. Athletes are obliged to play fair and, within and outside of competition, to mutually recognize and appreciate each individual athlete's abilities and skills as contributions to a shared practice and a shared value horizon. A development in sport towards increased fairness and justice and towards increased solidarity would be an indication of Honneth's criteria for moral progress.

### **General discussion**

Instead of a philosophical analysis of sport holding up an 'outside' ideal for reality, Honneth's theory provides a perspective from within sport and a point of departure in day to day embodied (sporting) life. The change of theoretical perspective allows for athletes' experiences to be the starting point for analysis of social conflict and struggles in sport. The perspective allows for the possibility of examining more closely sport's moral significance for the individual and to a certain extent for society.

Later I will return to my main research question and discuss the potential of sport as a sphere for recognition. Honneth views recognition as a fundamental need which, when provided, enables us to form identity, establish autonomy and engage in a process of self-realization. Establishment of certain relations-to-self does also affect our ability to participate in society. After discussing sport as a potential sphere for recognition, I will examine how recognition in sport affects our relations-to-self and our relations to others, before finally discussing how Honneth's theory provides a perspective that illuminates a new dimension in the discussion on why sport morally matters.

### **Sport as a sphere for recognition**

The underlying premise for sport to be a sphere for recognition is that it is practised in fair and just ways as analysed by, among others, Loland (2002). This is discussed in depth in ‘Love, rights and solidarity: sport’s potential for recognition’ and in ‘Sport and the obligation of solidarity’ but is also a presupposition in the other two articles. The conclusion from the papers is that fair play creates a relationship between athletes that promotes recognition. From a Kantian perspective, fair play requires athletes to view each other as subjects, as ends in themselves, not only as a means to an end. This facilitates a possibility for empathy and understanding between athletes – for recognizing each other in different ways. Drawing on Rawls, fair play also entails following the ethos of the sport in which athletes take part unless this ethos is unjust or in conflict with basic moral principles. Loland (2002), in line with Rawls (1971), considers voluntary engagement in rule-governed practices in contractualist terms. Voluntary engagement in sport gives rise to two obligations: one in fairness and one in doing one’s best in terms of ‘playing to win’. In the paper on solidarity, we argued that a further obligation of solidarity arose, that is, recognition of each athlete’s contribution to the sport in question. By applying Honneth’s theory of recognition, we seemingly pinpointed an overlooked potential for fair play in sport, namely the obligation for solidarity.

The paper on love is based on Honneth’s concept, but indicates that another form of love can also be available in practices like sport. The paper indicates that a less intersubjective, more self-reliant form of love is available through play. As such, the paper rests on an interpretation of Honneth and extends his notion of love. Honneth considers the formation of a stable identity and the possibility for self-realization and autonomy to rest on intersubjective recognition. The most important self-relation for Honneth is basic self-confidence, which is acquired through receiving love. This self-relation enables persons to express their needs and desires. In the paper, I suggest that self-knowledge seems to precede basic self-confidence in that this deep knowledge of self enables persons to be truer in expressing these needs and desires in relationships of mutual recognition.

While I think this form of recognition is less vulnerable and more available to most of us than is the case of love between two persons, it is not discussed as a form of recognition detached from social life. Play is an arena for intersubjective recognition in that we often depend upon others to play with us, and it is through discussing sport as a social practice that this basic

form of self-relation seems to emerge. Boxing is done with a partner (in sparring) or against an opponent (in the boxing fight), and all competitive sports are played against opponents within a team or as individuals. The departure from applying Honneth consists in viewing the self-relation available through play as overlapping or potentially more fundamental than the basic self-confidence available through love. As such, this self-relation can be available through a more accessible source than is the case with love as understood by Honneth.

In the article 'Jumping for recognition: women's ski jumping viewed as a struggle for rights' (Andersen & Loland, 2016), we identify the exclusion of women ski jumpers as discrimination. This is not unique – pinpointing the women ski jumpers' exclusion as discrimination had already been done by other scholars, for example, Pfister (2007), Vertinsky, Jette and Hofmann (2009) and Travers (2011). However, Honneth's theory provided resources to see beyond the singular case of ski jumping and point towards a potential for recognition in the form of rights – in that every person possessing the necessary skills and abilities for participation in the 'embodied discourse' of a sport, should rightfully be admitted into that sport. The concept of recognition has the power to disclose, not only how exclusion manifests a societal problem in a democratic society (discrimination), but also what motivates a struggle for reform. The effect of the exclusion of women was that they felt treated unfairly. Their claim was supported by empirical research from both history and sociology, and therefore we viewed their struggle for inclusion to be a legitimate struggle. By pointing towards the destructive consequences of exclusion for individuals' self-relation, the theory of recognition also paves the way to identifying a positive potential of rights in sport: sport can be a sphere where one is recognized as a generalized being – bestowing the same criteria as all other participants to receive rights.

In the paper on solidarity in sport, the concept of recognition highlighted the lack of solidarity as a form of disrespect. This disrespect arose despite Dumaresq possessing the right to participate in the practice. We found that, despite the formal, rule-bound inclusion of Dumaresq, she experienced marginalization. This marginalization manifested itself by Dumaresq not being accepted as a competitor providing capabilities and skills that contributed to the sport. Due to the established value horizon, she was not appreciated as a competitor in the women's class. This led to social marginalization and public statements (petitions and statements to media) not accepting her as a legitimate contestant. Some of the marginalization

was expressed as what was seen as morally unacceptable conduct towards Dumaresq (Dumaresq 2014), and she was continually faced with comments on her perceived advantage by being born a man (Duthie 2004). By pinpointing the form of disrespect she was exposed to (marginalization and insults), the potential for recognition in the form of solidarity was also illuminated. Downhill biking was shown to have a potential for recognition of Dumaresq's skills and abilities by changing the classification criteria from biological sex to weight. By changing the relevant criteria for inclusion, our argument was that this could change the common value horizon and release a potential for recognition in the form of solidarity.

### **Relation to self**

The discussion above shows that applying the theory of recognition to sport has led to identification of struggles for recognition pointing towards the potential for recognition in sport, but the theory of recognition has provided even more: it has added a dimension to discussions of the moral value of sport in providing concepts that identify how sport can contribute to the formation of a person's self-relation. Honneth's theory makes it possible to pinpoint the instances when a person is identifying herself *as* something and how being denied the chosen identity affects that person.

Sport can be seriously destructive, affecting in negative ways both identity-formation, autonomy and the possibility of self-realization for the athlete. On the other hand, it can be fundamentally constructive, and I think this is a potential towards which the papers point. If sport can be a sphere for recognition it can be an important contribution to establishing the three vital forms of self-relation defined by Honneth: basic self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem.

In the paper on love, Kiwanuka was seen to have suffered violations that deprived him of his bodily autonomy. The traumas resulting from his experiences made him lose control over himself and made him lose both hope and trust. Through boxing he regained a basic self-confidence and trust in other persons which enabled him to regain a good life but also to make life better for other persons. I have argued that the recognition provided through play enables the formation of self-knowledge, which not only seems to be an equally important self-

relation as basic self-confidence but is possibly an even more fundamental one. While basic self-confidence is an ‘underlying capacity to express needs and desires’ (Anderson, 1995, p. xiii), self-knowledge provides the capacity to recognize and identify these needs and desires. It seems to be just as potent a way of persons acquiring ‘a sense of trust in their own bodies as reliable sources of signals as to their own needs’ as basic self-confidence (Anderson, 1995, p. xiii), and, while a successful secession between mother and child provides the child with bodily autonomy (the ability to trust and acknowledge oneself as an independent being), play can provide an expansion of this bodily autonomy: through play the athlete can achieve new knowledge of what she can do. It also seems that the relation-to-self in sport (or in boxing) has an existential dimension – it can be a celebration or confirmation of one’s own existence. Thus, sport can be an activity that can provide freedom from ‘the strain of relating inner and outer reality (...)’ (Winnicott, cited in Honneth 1995b, p. 103).

The potential for such a self-relation in sport does not exclude the potential of sport for seriously damaging both bodily autonomy and basic self-confidence. There are numerous cases of depriving athletes of bodily autonomy, for example, in subjecting very young gymnasts to rigid training regimes or by subjecting athletes to strict diets. An athlete totally dependent and relying upon the decisions of her support system will most likely not gain any self-knowledge; the knowledge provided is external to the athlete. As the article on love demonstrates, the argument for sport providing a positive self-relation is dependent upon sport having an element of play (Loland, 2002). Therefore, cases depriving athletes of control over development of their skills as well as their performances are cases of disrespect within sport, not of recognition.

Sport’s potential for providing self-respect was seen to be dependent on being given rights to participate. The women ski jumpers were deprived of being viewed and of seeing themselves as rational and responsible agents who could make a contribution to the ski jumping community. By being excluded from ski jumping, they were denied the opportunity to view themselves as ski jumpers. As such, a vital part of identity-formation was disturbed. Honneth’s theory provides the resources to view how deeply such instances of disrespect can affect the individual. I think the theory also provides an insight into the struggle for the right to jump, not only as a historic struggle but also as a series of instances of phenomenologically



experienced disrespect from Kolstad to Sagen where women jumpers were being ‘trampled on, time and again’ (Sagen, cited in Sæther, 2004).

Solidarity provides a person with confirmation that her skills and abilities are valued by a community. Dumaresq was denied solidarity and the marginalization affected her relationship to self in that she did feel excluded and alone (Duthie, 2004), but it also affected her ability to view herself as possessing relevant skills and abilities for her sport because she was seen to have an unfair advantage in being born a man. While her right to participate was indisputable, she was not appreciated as a person contributing to the development of the sport. The disrespect experienced could have resulted in the loss of her self-esteem. The marginalization of Dumaresq was so deeply hurtful that she described one particular incident of disrespect as ‘the day I died’ (Dumaresq, 2014). Marginalization seems in some ways a harsher form of disrespect than exclusion and/or being deprived of rights; while not having the right to participate does deprive an athlete of doing what she loves, marginalization is only a partial allowance: one is a participant, but not one who is appreciated. While rights are given us as generalized others, solidarity is given as an evaluation of personal qualities – of what makes one unique as a person. Disrespect in this area will, as Dumaresq’s quote shows, have a strong impact on the relation-to-self.

I think one of the main incentives for adjusting sports rules, so that they are perceived as fair and just, lies in avoiding the damage marginalization can have on a person’s self-esteem. While marginalization is present in many areas both in society and sport, sport, with its classification systems has a particular challenge in the inclusion of persons not adhering to traditional (and outdated) perceptions of gender. Honneth’s theory of recognition provides the moral incentive for *why* it is pressing to find good solutions that realize sport’s potential for solidarity.

### **Relation to other persons**

Recognition does not only affect our relation-to-self but also our relation to other persons and our ability to participate in society. Lack of recognition can disturb or disrupt our relationships with others as well as endanger our possibilities for free and autonomous interaction. For Honneth, recognition is manifested within relationships of mutual recognition.

It follows that there must be a condition of reciprocity within the concept of recognition. Lack of love can deprive us of trust in and care for other persons, lack of rights can deprive us of respect for other persons, and lack of solidarity can make us not esteem other persons.

In Kiwanuka's case, he suffered a trauma that made him lose trust in other persons. Boxing enabled him to regain this trust. It was a way out of the seclusion arising from his refugee status towards involvement in society again. Regaining trust in other persons, but also his reconnection to himself as discussed above, made it possible for him to participate in meaningful ways both in sport and in society. He says his motivation to take an education stemmed from his fellow boxers, who were all students (Stokke, 2013). Based on the case of Kiwanuka, it seems that boxing, and perhaps sport in general, can provide a person with resources to reconnect with himself, even after being exposed to violation. But it also seems to provide the possibility of re-establishing relationships of mutual trust and care, enabling the athlete to engage closely with other persons again.

Wacquant (1992) emphasizes the relationship of trust needed in sparring in order to realize the boxers' potential. It is a deep trust in that the other person is there to help you become a better boxer; the boxers are literally putting their life in each other's hands. The unique aspect of sparring is that this trust, which for Honneth is found in close and personal relationships, is in a person that you do not necessarily know well; the context of sparring establishes a sphere relying on trust. In modern societies we value self-reliance and independence, but the paper shows that such a form of reliance on others allows us to seek a common goal: a goal of providing participants with a deeper knowledge of themselves. In boxing, as perhaps with many other sports, this goal is achieved only by choosing to make oneself vulnerable and exposed to other persons. This knowledge is vital for our ability to be true to ourselves and others in close relationships; it enables us to better communicate our needs and desires, as well as trust that our voice is worthy of being heard. If such arenas for trust within sport are indeed spheres for a form of love, it seems that sport can have a significant potential for developing persons to have trust in themselves and in others, and who can contribute to society in constructive ways.

The paper 'Jumping for recognition: women's ski jumping viewed as a struggle for rights' (Andersen & Loland, 2016), is perhaps the best illustration of all the cases in the thesis of how

recognition is a necessary condition for ‘moral subjectivity and agency’ (Brink and Owen, 2007, p. 3). In being excluded from the practice of ski jumping, women ski jumpers were denied influence on the development of the sport as well as interaction with other ski jumpers. They could not show other ski jumpers respect or be a part of the discourse on ski jumping: Loland and McNamee (2000, p. 75) view competition as a verbal and embodied discourse in which various interpretations of the rules are ‘presented, challenged, and negotiated’. Owing to exclusion, for a long while women ski jumpers were not seen as ski jumpers at all – they were not part of the ski jumping community and as such could neither receive nor give respect. So Travers’s (2011) reference to the ‘deafening silence of sex segregation...’ should indeed also encompass the women being deprived of their voice in the discourse of ski jumping.

By being denied solidarity, Dumaresq was marginalized in her sport but only partially deprived of the ability to interact with others. Her contribution to the discourse in the competitions was in part, rejected in that, although having the right to participate, she was not viewed as having the right qualities for participation (by some of her competitors). While not being excluded from the discourse, it led to difficulties for her in showing solidarity as well as befriending other women cyclists (Duthie 2004). Exclusion, such as in the case of women ski jumpers, necessarily entailed non-participation for the whole group but seemed to have reinforced the identity and solidarity between women ski jumpers making them able to mobilize an ongoing struggle for the right to participate. Marginalization seems to have the potential of disturbing and unsettling a whole social milieu within a sport; in Dumaresq’s case it led not only to her marginalization, but also to sub-groups and disagreements within the whole scene of elite downhill biking. Thus, it seems that marginalization has the potential to destroy a sport from within if legitimate struggles for solidarity are overlooked.

## CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION AND FINAL REMARKS

The main research question in this thesis is why sport morally matters, or, reframed in Honneth's terminology, *What is the potential of sport as a sphere for recognition?* I have argued for the relevance of Honneth's theory in order to gain insight into sport and its meaning and value both to athletes and to society. By assessing and discussing the different forms of recognition in relation to sport, I have concluded that, on the premise of practiced according to ideals of fair play, sport has the potential for recognition in three different forms: love, solidarity and rights. This might be true of other practices as well, but it seems to me that sport might have an especially strong potential in this respect. The aggregated recognition within sport is that all three forms are present to a significant degree. In other words, if practised according to its ideals of fair play (Loland, 2002), sport possesses a significant ethical potential. Basically, this is why sport morally matters.

Honneth's theory of recognition (1995b) has been proven to provide a good starting point for identifying, understanding and interpreting normative challenges in sport. The theory has been of help in raising awareness of normative problems in sport, such as discrimination and exclusion (rights) and marginalization and insult (solidarity) as well as regaining trust and a form of basic self-confidence or self-knowledge (love). It has provided resources for identifying affected parties in diverse ethical dilemmas; in the article on love, Honneth's concept of violation led to identifying Kiwanuka's story as a story of violation of recognition in the form of love and what potential there is for love in sport; in the case of the women ski jumpers it led to identifying the relevant parties as the excluded women ski jumpers and the FIS and IOC, and, in the article on solidarity, the concept of recognition led to identifying Dumaresq as the marginalized party but also to identifying the claims of her competitors as claims for fairness and equality.

In applying Honneth's theory, the different papers have taken as their starting point cases of violations or disrespect: not inherent recognition. However, through the empirical research supporting the phenomenological claim for recognition in each case, these cases have been shown to be legitimate struggles for recognition. They are struggles pointing towards a non-realized potential for recognition.

Because of sport's potential for recognition, it seems that sport can facilitate relationships of trust (love), equality (rights) and of solidarity between persons. According to Honneth, these intersubjective relationships of recognition forms are essential for our identity, autonomy and the possibility for self-realization. When fair play is adhered to, these relationships are in fact relationships of recognition. As such, they enable us to act as free and autonomous moral agents in order to facilitate a moral discourse between equals in sport (Loland and McNamee, 2000).

The theory of recognition therefore gives a clear answer to why sport morally matters in that it can provide recognition that forms identity and enables self-realization, but it also illuminates the significant destructive potential of sport if practised in unfair and unjust ways. Within sport and sporting organizations there should be a willingness to adjust the predominant idea of fair play according to legitimate struggles for recognition, as did the FIS and the IOC in the inclusion of women's ski jumping and as did Dumaresq's competitors.

Within this perspective, sport can also be seen to offer recognition *democratically*; it is attainable for many of us and at many different levels of achievement. Not everyone can become a professional athlete or reach positions in society that are subject to significant social acclaim, but most of us can have the possibility of doing sport in some form or other. We can establish relationships that provide trust and care, as well as gaining self-knowledge. We can experience recognition in being viewed as an equal, in receiving the right to play by possessing the general features earning us this right, and we can receive genuine appreciation for our skills and abilities viewed as a contribution to a common good: the practice of our sport. Team players and competitors at all levels can find recognition in the forms of friendship, solidarity and rights as a result of receiving their due according to the rules. This underlines the necessity of making "sport for all" more than a catchphrase.

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# PAPER 1



## Love, Rights, and Solidarity: Sports' Potential for Recognition

### Authors' contribution:

- A) conception and design of the study
- B) acquisition of data
- C) analysis and interpretation of data
- D) manuscript preparation
- E) obtaining funding

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### ABSTRACT

Sport occupies a central role in modern society. Philosophers of sport suggest that sport can offer a realm of play by being structurally and logically independent from everyday life. But what ethical values can sport be seen to offer us, if any? Explanations are sought based on Honneth's theory of recognition. Honneth views the presence of three forms of recognition - love, rights, and solidarity - as necessary conditions not only for a just society, but also for a society in which human beings can realize their potential and experience life as being good. Based on Honneth, I argue that sport can be seen as an arena with potential for an aggregated form of recognition. If practiced in the right way, sport has the potential to realize all three forms of recognition inherent in society.

### KEYWORDS

normative social theory, Honneth, recognition in sport

### Introduction

Sport in many forms and at many levels seems to attract interest in societies all over the world. Elite sport is broadcasted and viewed by millions, and regular exercise is an important part of many people's lives. Further, sport is integrated in educational systems and schools. How can we understand this extensive fascination with sport? What can sport offer us?

In this essay I will discuss sport in its organized forms, which is training and competition in traditional sport disciplines. These are extensive practices engaging large parts of the population in modern society both as practitioners and as spectators. Thus, the social and cultural impact of sport should not be underestimated. In *The White Paper on Sport* presented by the Commission of the European Communities (2007), it is stated that a sport "generates important values such as team spirit, solidarity, tolerance and fair play, contributing to personal development and fulfilment". This quote indicates the general view that sport can offer significant values to practitioners.

The values and functions of sport is a recurrent theme in more critical approaches in sport science and research. In his historical study, Allen Guttmann finds modern sports characterized by equality (both in the opportunity to compete and in creating a level playing field), rationalization, specialization, bureaucratization, quantification, and a quest for records (1978). Therefore, in many ways sport mirror the societies of which it is a part, and modern sport are a part of modernity (Guttmann, 1978; Morgan, 1994).

But the features of modern sport also open a space partially outside the everyday sphere that “holds forth the possibility of a realm of relative if not absolute freedom” (Guttmann, 1978, p. 157).

Within a philosophical and ethical context, the focus is on which potential values we can attain from sport. The essential questions in this article are therefore whether there are certain values in sport, and, if so, under what conditions these values can be expressed.

An ethical view of sport need not be established in opposition to historical or sociological views, but can be developed with history and sociology as important sources. Sports philosophers such as Weiss (1969), Fraleigh (1975), Loland (2002), Morgan (2006), and McNamee (2008) have examined the value of sport to the individual and society. It nevertheless seems that Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition has something to bring to the table. It represents an interdisciplinary approach, but also includes a uniquely ethical perspective of relevance to sport. One advantage of Honneth’s work compared to many other philosophical theories is that he seeks to anchor his theory in everyday moral experience, making the application of the theory not just an overriding analysis, but an attempt to identify moral problems as empirical facts.

### Axel Honneth and the theory of recognition

Honneth’s main focus is on social theory and moral philosophy. He seeks to give a “better account of the relationship between socialization and individualization, between social reproduction and the formation of individual identity” (Honneth, 2012, p. 7). His aim is to give an alternative and fruitful account of how human beings develop into moral subjects and agents.

*[An account] requires a model of human agency as constituted in and through relations with others, where one’s formation as an ethical subject and agent is dependent on the responsiveness of others with respect to care for one’s needs and emotions, respect for one’s moral and legal dignity, and esteem for one’s social achievement* (Brink, & Owen, 2007, p. 4).

If human beings do not experience responsiveness in these areas, they are unable to develop a sound “practical relation-to-self” - a stable personal identity (Honneth, 1995b, p. 129). In order to become a responsible moral agent, one has to experience recognition on three different levels. We need to experience love in our close relationships in order to form self-confidence, rights as a citizen in order to develop self-respect, and solidarity as a member of civil society in order to form self-esteem (Brink, & Owen, 2007). Recognition is received through both bodily and verbal communication and is therefore inherent in those reciprocal and social relationships of which we are a part. Recognition can be understood “as a way of rationally responding to evaluative qualities we have learned to perceive in others” (Honneth, 2012, p. 85).

Recognition is fundamental both for the self-realization of individuals and for maintaining a just society. Drawing on Kant’s thoughts on self-restriction, Honneth thinks that it is the recognition of essentially human characteristics in the other person that leads us to restrict our action towards others. His theory is an attempt to reconstruct Hegel’s concept of recognition, where Hegel saw recognition as “the reciprocal limitation of one’s own, egocentric desires for the benefit of the other” (Honneth, 2012, p. 17).

The identification of the three forms of recognition - love, rights, and solidarity - is accomplished through a negative process because morality (or forms of mutual recognition) is made visible and pronounced to us when it is violated. The development of democratic societies can be viewed as a “struggle for recognition” (Honneth, 1995b)<sup>1</sup>, emphasizing that the democratic and humanistic ideals in these societies have been achieved through an ongoing process.

*Unlike all utilitarian models of explanation, it suggests the view that motives for social resistance and rebellion are formed in the context of moral experiences stemming from the violation of deeply rooted expectations regarding recognition* (Honneth, 1995b, p. 163).

<sup>1</sup>My presentation of the theory of recognition in this article is mainly based on Honneth’s two works from 1995: *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (1995a) and *The Fragmented World of the Social: Essays in Social and Political Philosophy* (1995b).

By viewing the process as a struggle, disrespect becomes an indicator of morally problematic treatment of human beings. As participants in society, we have legitimate normative expectations to receive love, rights, and solidarity. The different forms of recognition are contained within different spheres of society, thereby creating “patterns of recognition” that are typical for each sphere (Honneth, 1995b, p. 95). These patterns of recognition contain a specific potential for moral development and for developing a certain relation to self. The spheres also define the roles the subject is expected to fulfill as a participant in society.

Table 1. Honneth’s conceptual framework

Recognition	Self-Relation	Sphere	Role	Violation/Disrespect	Integrity
Love	Basic self-confidence	Private	Private person	Abuse/harm	Physical integrity
Rights	Self-respect	State/Society	Citizen	Denial of rights	Respect
Solidarity	Self-esteem	Civil society	Fellow citizen	Marginalization, insult	Social esteem

Source: own study based on Lysaker (2011)<sup>2</sup>.

There are three forms of disrespect. The differences between these forms are the potential they have for disturbing the individual’s development of a sound relationship to themselves and to other persons. The identification of the three forms of non-recognition or disrespect is therefore the key to identifying and understanding the three forms of mutual recognition – love, rights, and solidarity (Honneth, 1995b). Every form of recognition not only establishes a connection to the society, but also enables the person to form certain relations to self.

The most fundamental type of disrespect is that of an individual’s physical integrity (Honneth, 1995b). The violation consists not only in the pain experienced, but also in depriving the person of control over his or her own body. Disrespect of physical integrity can strip persons of both self-confidence and trust, and this can affect their interaction with other people. This form of abuse is fundamental. It does not just affect a person’s normative understanding of self (as with the other two categories), but can lead to the disruption of or inability to form a positive image of him- or herself even on a physical level. The corresponding form of recognition is love. Love is by nature restricted to a limited number of people, for example, children, lovers, parents, or friends. Therefore, love is tied to our primary social relationships (Honneth, 1995b).

The second type of disrespect is when a person is denied rights within a society. Being denied rights therefore not only involves the exclusion from the sphere of law, but also entails a loss of self-respect in the inability to view oneself as an individual deemed morally competent enough for the reception of the same rights as other members of society. Recognition in the form of rights is distributed within the state, and rights can therefore be viewed as the institutionalized form of respect (Honneth, 1995a, 1995b).

The third type of disrespect is in the sphere of civil society, where disrespect shows in the form of the devaluation or marginalization of individual or collective lifestyles. Honneth views social status as an expression of the degree to which an individual’s personal skills and abilities are socially accepted within society (Honneth, 1995a). It is a sign of the value that is ascribed to a person’s form of self-realization. The devaluation of an individual’s lifestyle means that individuals cannot accord social value to their abilities. A lack of social esteem for one’s traits and abilities therefore causes a loss of self-esteem. The form of recognition corresponding to marginalization is solidarity, something which entails a consciousness of commonly-shared burdens and responsibilities: a shared horizon of values.

<sup>2</sup>Lysaker, Odin (2011). “Axel Honneths anerkjennelsesteori” /“Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition”/ (own translation). Lectures, PhD course, University of Agder, Norway. Used with the author’s permission. I have based my table on Lysaker’s, but with slight modifications in line with Honneth’s more expansive table in *The Struggle for Recognition* (1995, p. 129).

### Honneth and sport

Honneth's theory of recognition has not been applied in a larger scale in analyses of sport. A Kantian version of the concept of recognition is presented by Tuxill and Wigmore (1998) in their article "Merely meat? Respect for persons in sport and games". In it, they present two different versions of the notion of respect: "recognition respect" and "appraisal". The former is based on Kantian analysis and is restricted to intellectual and rational capacities. Tuxill and Wigmore explore the different ways in which persons can be seen as beings who demand respect, which human features trigger this demand, and whether respect in any of the versions is manifested through sport (1998). Their conclusion is that sport designed so that the maintenance of only a minimum amount of respect for other subjects is perhaps all we can hope for (Tuxill, & Wigmore, 1998, p. 115). Honneth bases his theory of recognition on Hegel, although his notion of respect has a "strong Kantian element" (Anderson, 1995, p. 14), and despite Tuxill and Wigmore's conclusion, it seems that Honneth's approach allows for a greater moral potential in sports than that of a minimum demand.

Honneth's theory is developed within the perspective of a democratic nation-state. Sport can be viewed as an arena for the recognition of athletic skills, thereby placing itself within the area of recognition that Honneth refers to as "solidarity". Honneth focuses largely on working life when discussing solidarity, but his definition of the arena of solidarity as practiced with a shared value-horizon opens for most cultural activities as well. To satisfy Honneth's criteria for ethical legitimacy, sport cannot be an arena for marginalization or insult. This is a normative minimum demand, but I propose that sport might have the potential for particularly strong recognition or an aggregated form of recognition in which all three forms of recognition can be given. If love, solidarity, and rights can be identified as essential features of sport, the practice is more than morally acceptable.

A prerequisite seems to be that sport is a sphere partially located outside everyday life. Based on Suits (1988, 1973), and Morgan (1994, 2006), I suggest that sport is demarcated from society in general by their game rules and inner logic, thereby creating a sphere set apart - at least partially - from our everyday life. After stating the case for sport as a separate sphere, I proceed to discuss whether there are certain values in sport. Within Honneth's theory these values should be forms of love, rights, and solidarity. I will also discuss under what conditions these values can be expressed.

### Sport as a separate sphere

In line with Guttmann (1978), the idea of sport as a separate sphere of society has also been a prevailing argument within the philosophy of sport. In his classic article "The Elements of Sport", Bernard Suits (1988, p. 11) defines sports as a subgroup of games and offers a definition of what it means to participate in a game: "Playing a game is the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles". To Suits, this willingness expresses a playful attitude—the participant has to accept the irrationality of game rules that in effect sets the game apart from everyday life. If participating in the 3000 meter steeple chase, for example, one has to accept the necessity of jumping over the obstacles instead of taking the easiest way to the finishing line. Sport is distinguished from everyday instrumental rationality and creates a space containing the play/game/sport's own logic - sport's ludic element. The conditions for establishing this separate play-sphere are created by the rules of the game and the players' acceptance of these rules. This is in line with Morgan's argument on the inner logic of sport (1994). According to Morgan (1994, p. 216), the irreducibility of this inner logic "disconnects sporting practices from whatever obvious links they might have to society and to the rest of our lives and molds them into novel, distinctive undertakings".

The link between play, games, and sport has been discussed by many sports philosophers and historians. Guttmann (1978), Suits (1973), Morgan (1994), Loland (2002), and others have stressed the connection between sport and play. Guttmann (1978, p. 7) defines sports as "playful" physical contests, that is, as non-utilitarian contests which include an important measure of physical as well as intellectual skill. Suits (1988) claims that all games, including sports, have much in common with play because they



all require a playful attitude to accept irrational rules. Morgan (1994, p. 211) describes the “gratuitous logic” of sport as the delight in overcoming the complex and indirect ways to achieve the goal of the game constituted by the game rules. Loland’s theory of fair play (2002) maintains that sports competitions are at their best when performed with a playful attitude. The potential for play can therefore seem to be inherent in sport, but this potential is not always realized.

An early and influential cultural theory of play was presented by Johan Huizinga in *Homo Ludens* (Huizinga, 1963). Huizinga sees play as the foundation for all other forms of cultural expression and puts play at the center of all surplus human activity. Play in its extensive forms can be seen as establishing arenas for human coexistence and cooperation, or within the framework of a theory of recognition as an arena for intersubjective recognition. Huizinga himself opposed the view of sport as being closely related to play. He saw the competitive sports of the 1930s as being a dichotomy of play, more similar to the industrialized work in the modern Western world than to a leisure activity generating human forms of expression. Nevertheless, in line with Loland’s fair play theory (2002), I adopt the view that sport has a non-utilitarian character of play when performed at its best.

The area of play is also discussed by Honneth. By receiving love, our primary needs and emotions are confirmed, and through a positive primary relationship we can develop self-confidence. Honneth draws on the work of psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott (1965), who found that the physical contact between child and parent is essential for the child’s further development, and when the secession between child and parent is substituted with an area of play, the area of the stress of reality-acceptance is relieved by an “intermediate area of experience” (Winnicott, & Honneth, 1995b, p. 103).

### Applying Honneth

Honneth’s theory conceptualizes recognition in modern democratic societies and should be relevant in an analysis of sport. But it is not only his concepts that seem appropriate for a critical analysis of sport. My initial assertion of the benefits of using the theory was that it is anchored in lived ethical life. It represents an attempt to assess the gap between the ideal and reality. This anchoring in everyday life is made possible by an “empirically grounded phenomenology” (Lysaker, 2008, p. 247). The starting point for analysis is a case - an individual human experience of violation or disrespect - and this is what gives the method the phenomenological input. The case is an indication of a problem that is taken seriously by an individual or a group, but Honneth stresses that these experiences must be further confirmed by empirical scientific research and the phenomenological and empirical input has to be examined critically.

In the argument that follows, I will discuss whether love, rights, and solidarity are present in sport, and, if so, under what conditions they exist. I will do this primarily using the first and last steps of the method (the phenomenological input and critical analysis). The methodical approach is to identify the violation or disrespect inherent in the case, thereafter identifying the lacking form of recognition corresponding to the disrespect. Finally, a critical reflection on the gap between reality and possibility is required to pinpoint if there is a potential of recognition. The realization of any possible potential will depend upon whether the context has the resources to foster and promote the potential for recognition. The use of just the first and last step in Honneth’s method represents a danger in that the phenomenological input might risk being unsupported by any empirical knowledge from the social sciences of sport. Nevertheless, it can give an indication of how these forms of recognition are manifested - or should be manifested - within sport.

## 1. Love

Love is an emotional relationship between significant others, by nature restricted to a limited number of partners in interaction (Honneth, 1995b). It is a condition for developing self-confidence in identifying and voicing needs and desires in a context of trust. How then does this form of recognition apply to sport? I suggest that love can be inherent in sport both as a form of reciprocal recognition between athletes and as play.

### *Love in sport*

The Norwegian/ Ugandan boxer, Richard Kiwanuka, is a refugee from Uganda who came on his own to Norway when he was 16 years old. His family was killed by rebels, and Kiwanuka was traumatized from his experiences. He started boxing in *Bergen Atletklubb* and says boxing helped him recover from his traumas. After boxing for just a few months, his appetite came back and he started sleeping soundly again (Stokke, 2013). He also developed friendships through sport. In 1997, he won the featherweight class in the Norwegian junior championship and was awarded the “Best Fighter” title, regardless of weight class. The year after, he won the featherweight class in the National Championship for seniors and gained a place on the national team (Sunnanå, 2013). He started the organizations “Way Forward” in Norway and “Bring Children From Streets” in Uganda, where the focus lies on using sport for gaining self-confidence, giving children the opportunity to experience the mastering of skills. Kiwanuka has received many awards for his work, among them the 2010 “Role Model of the Year” award from the Ministry of Children, Equality, and Social Inclusion. Kiwanuka claims boxing saved his life and that sport makes one strong and gives one self-confidence (Stokke, 2013).

The story of Kiwanuka can be interpreted in a way that gives credibility to Honneth’s concept of love. Honneth stresses that the disrespect or violation of physical integrity can affect the individual’s relationship with other persons and with his/herself. This implies that the person’s normative self-relation as well as his/her physical self-relation is affected. Kiwanuka’s trauma seemed to make him “lose” himself. Through boxing, he regained confidence in himself - and also in his fellow human beings. It seems that through boxing, Kiwanuka experienced Honneth’s intersubjective form of love: a bond between significant others.

The physical side of sport and the physical closeness that one acquires by competing with others can establish a close friendship between athletes. For Honneth, love as the fundamental relationship of recognition is tied to our primary social relationships: family relationships, friendships, and intimate relationships. For many athletes, sport has had a formative role in their relationships, and their participation in sport has allowed them to meet people with whom they have formed a close friendship. For Kiwanuka, sport re-established his ability to form trusting and reciprocal relationships with other people.

But love does not only seem to be present in sport as a form of reciprocal recognition. Kiwanuka’s experiences of violation seem to have been overcome by his devotion to boxing. Not only did he regain trust in his fellow human beings, but he claims to have regained a connection to himself and his own body through sport. The paradox is that his reconnection to himself, also on a physical level, occurred through a sport that can seem both violent and aggressive to outsiders. However, in his qualitative studies of boxing, sociologist Wacquant (1992, 2005) demonstrates the significant potential of the sport - and that of sparring in particular, which involves a deep interaction and collaboration between boxers - in developing meaning, trust, and friendship. Building on Winnicott’s findings, Honneth argues that the child’s creativity and human imagination in general presupposes that the child develops an ability to be alone. Through close contact with its parents, the child creates a basic sense of security and trust enabling it to exist in - and create - its own world, a play world. By expressing ourselves through play, we have the chance to recreate this earliest balance between inner and outer reality; we can lose ourselves in play, for a time allowing the mind and body to be experienced as a complete whole. Through play, Kiwanuka seemed to be able to regain an access to himself that was seemingly lost through the violation he had suffered.

Unfortunately, Kiwanuka’s experiences of violation and loss are not unique in their character. The story is nevertheless a story of hope and the realization of human potential. As I initially stated, my use

of Honneth's method in this article is just an onset of the method; illustrating the concepts with a phenomenological experience and further research into the potential of sport in "regaining" oneself following trauma would be interesting. If Kiwanuka's story is supported by psychological and sociological findings, this would then indicate that sport's potential for love is not just as a reaffirmation of past experiences of love, but also perhaps as a compensation for love never given. I suggest that the arena for play created in sport might give a version of love that is less inter-subjective and more self-affirming because it involves the absorption of the whole person. In addition to the play element in games and sports which forms a reconstruction of our first form of self-recognition, sport also offers an arena for being completely absorbed and involved as a phenomenological being. Consequently, there is a potential for "self-recognition" in sport that can be further developed within the theory of recognition.

## 2. Rights

The second type of disrespect is when individuals are structurally excluded from receiving certain rights within a society (Honneth, 1995b). "Rights" are viewed as a pattern of recognition that has developed historically through a struggle for recognition. Traditionally, recognition in the form of rights was closely connected to social status, but the transition to modernity in Western societies entailed a secession of rights from privileges and social status, thereby establishing two new forms of recognition, one general and one individual. The concept and awareness of rights is therefore dependent on the historical and social context (Honneth, 1995b). The recognition of rights is the general form because it entails the recognition of the subject as a generalized being who inhibits the necessary criteria (moral accountability) for participation in society's formation of will, for example by having the right to vote. By receiving rights, individuals are recognized with respect by other rights holders. Receiving respect is important for being able to form self-respect, that is, viewing oneself as equal to others. Solidarity is the individual counterpart of rights; it is the recognition of the individual, while rights are directed toward a universalized and generalized other (Honneth, 1995b).

### *Rights in sport*

In the early years of ski jumping as an organized sport in Norway, women were participants in the competitions. But female competitors usually had to compete against men since competitions for women were not held at that time. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ski jumping became even more clearly a masculine domain (Vertinsky et al., 2009), and despite the fact that there were some prominent female ski jumpers, women were excluded from the sport. Women jumpers never entered any national team and were marginalized in the sport until the beginning of the 1990s. At that time, women ski jumpers, both in Norway and in the rest of the world, were allowed to be test-runners in international competitions for men. In 2004, a conflict arose between the most prominent female Norwegian jumpers and the Norwegian Ski Association (NSF). The best female jumpers were denied the task of being test-jumpers in the (male) Continental Cup arranged in the ski flying arena in Vikersund, Norway. The NSF stated that the grounds for the rejection were that only a few female jumpers were competent enough to master the ski flying arena and that it would be too dangerous to allow the female jumpers to undertake the test jumps (Kjernli, 2014). There was an extensive media debate on the topic, and the ongoing conflicts between the female jumpers and the NSF were also reported to the Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman, who deemed the exclusion to be discrimination (<http://www.ldo.no>, 2004).

During the conflict between the NSF and the female jumpers, one of Norway's leading daily newspapers, *Verdens Gang*, had a web debate where Anette Sagen, the best Norwegian female jumper, answered questions online. When questioned about her qualifications to jump in the ski flying hill of Vikersund and presented with doubts about her skills, Sagen answered: "I am sure. I am qualified" (<http://tpn.vg.no/intervju/tittel/87>, 2004).

The conflict between the female ski jumpers and the NSF illustrates how athletes can feel deprived of what they see as a right within their sport. Female ski jumpers were not being recognized as having earned the right (by being skilled ski jumpers and training to a certain level) to test jump<sup>3</sup>. “Rights” within the sphere of sports can be seen as being contingent to physical capacity. In sport, what we want to measure is first and foremost athletic abilities. To be a member of any sports community, it is necessary to possess a certain skill (and the will to develop it). Sagen and the other female jumpers felt they were not being respected as ski jumpers. It could be argued, as the NSF did, that the women lacked the necessary skills to jump the ski flying arena. Such an objection would need to be founded in a safety concern, since safety is a leading principle in ski jumping, thereby reflecting the principle of equality. If women ski jumpers measure up to the standard needed to perform a safe jump, the only reason for excluding them would seem to be to preserve ski jumping for men.

### 3. Solidarity

The form of mutual recognition present in civil society is social esteem or appraisal which allows individuals to relate positively to their personal skills and abilities. The practice of marginalization or insults is the disrespect shown in this area. Honneth (1995b) regards this form of recognition as being important in preserving and expanding a positive relation-to-self. This is the sphere where we are given recognition as individuals.

While rights are appraisals of the traits the subject shares with other members of society, social appraisal is given to the abilities that are particular to the individual, those traits that mark individuality. It presupposes that social relations are characterized by symmetrical appreciation between persons that are both autonomous and individualized (Honneth, 2007). Because it is individual in form, the appreciation of skills and abilities is not available to all. Different skills and abilities are not shared human traits, but contribute to a shared horizon of values within a group or a community (Honneth, 1995b). The more diversified the shared horizon is, the more personal traits and skills will be recognized, and the more room for self-realization/individualization there will be. The potential for recognition in the form of solidarity in a pluralistic society is a “post-conventional” form referring to a situation in which most members of society can be given social appraisal for their skills and abilities and thereby establish and maintain their self-esteem (Honneth, 1995b, p. 124). Social status and respect are no longer bestowed on the individual (mainly) because of their participation in a collective activity, but instead they are given because of personal achievement within a recognized practice. They share certain values that make each person’s skills and abilities seem meaningful for their shared practice.

Being valued in this way has an effect on people’s practical relationship to themselves. We are being recognized and given recognition for the skills and abilities that we are born with or have developed in life: these are the distinguishing marks of individuals. Recognition and self-realization can be said to express the ultimate expression of individual freedom. In viewing sport as a realm of relative freedom (Guttmann, 1978; Morgan, 1994; Suits, 1988), sport seem to create an arena for this “post-conventional form” of recognition of athletic skill appreciated through the shared value-horizon of sport.

Suits (1973, 1988) maintain that this separate sphere of play/ games and sports creates a space for expressing more of ourselves than society normally allows room for. The increasing popularity of modern sports can be interpreted as a change towards according social value to one’s athletic skills. Therationalization and bureaucratization of sport can be viewed as a transformation from a pastime to a more organized practice accepted and appreciated by society as a legitimate and acceptable way of spending one’s leisure time. The status of sport as a valid and important form of expressing oneself gives sport participants the possibility and potential of recognition in the form of solidarity. Their efforts and priorities are seen as being worthy of achieving social acceptance. This places sport safely within the sphere of civil society in the conceptual framework.

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<sup>3</sup>The conflict over female ski jumping in Norway was not about women competing in the same class as men, but about females being allowed to compete and jump at all.

*Solidarity in sport*

In addition to sport being accepted in society as a chosen lifestyle or leisure activity, I suggest that recognition can be received within sport itself. Following Honneth's method, the negation of recognition must first be identified.

A case that illustrates disrespect in the form of a lack of social acceptance within sport is that of Michelle Dumaresq, a transsexual Canadian downhill mountain biker. Michelle Dumaresq, who became a professional woman mountain biker, was born a man but realized as a child that her gender identity was that of a woman (Duthie, 2004). Suffering from gender dysphoria (a diagnosis of persons with a significant discontent /dysphoria/ with the biological sex they have been assigned to and/or expectations linked to an associated gender role), Dumaresq started hormone treatment at the age of 21 and underwent sex reassignment surgery in 1996, when she was 26 (Reifner, 2002).

Dumaresq started competing in 1999, always being open about her transgender history. She won the novice class at the Bear Mountain race in British Columbia in 2001, 2.5 seconds faster than the fastest women professionals, and rose through the Canada Cup Mountain Bike Series from beginner to pro during her first year, winning the national series in 2002. But her progress was not to go undisputed, and in July 2001 the Canadian Cycling Association and Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) suspended Dumaresq's license after a campaign organized by some of Dumaresq's fellow bikers. It was reissued in 2002 due to the fact that she was a woman in legal terms (Billman, 2004). In 2006, Dumaresq won the Canadian Women's Downhill Championship. The winner of second place, Danika Schroeter, donned a shirt that proclaimed "100% Pure Woman Champ 2006". Schroeter was suspended for three months for this inappropriate behavior (The Vancouver Sun, 2006, August 3). Years later, Dumaresq described the incident as "The Day I Died" (Dumaresq, 2014).

By analyzing cases of disrespect, it is possible to uncover what the term *solidarity* should entail in sport: the appreciation and recognition of athletes' skills and abilities by their fellow players and/or competitors. They are seen as a contribution to the shared value-horizon established by sport's inner logic and rationality (Guttman, 1978; Morgan, 1994). This "inner form" of recognition is inherent within the practice. I suggest it is a stronger form of recognition than the recognition given to athletes in society in general: recognition given by partners that the athlete normally views as being more competent is more significant for the athlete because other athletes possess the same skills and abilities the athlete seeks to manifest. Naturally, any violation or expression of disrespect within the practice might have the power to interrupt an athlete's relationship to him- or herself to a greater degree than "external" recognition.

There may seem to be a striking parallel in the stories of Dumaresq and the Norwegian women ski jumpers in so far as individuals and groups in both cases are excluded or marginalized from a sport because of their gender. But in Dumaresq's case, despite having the formal right to compete, solidarity was not given by her fellow women racers. Dumaresq was not seen as being one of them. The struggle of the Norwegian women jumpers was a struggle for their rights; they thought themselves athletically qualified to jump in the ski flying arena. They fought to be granted rights given to them as "generalized others" - as persons embodying a relevant athletic skill.

**Concluding Remarks**

The essential questions in this article asked whether there are certain values in sport, and, if so, under what conditions these values can be expressed. I have given a tentative argument for the relevance of Honneth's theory to an understanding of the value of sport. The conclusion is that sport has the potential of recognition in three different forms: love, solidarity, and rights. This might be true of other practices as well. But it seems to me that sport might have an especially strong potential in this respect. The aggregated recognition within sport is not just in that the three forms can be present, but also that at least two of these forms seem to be double-layered: solidarity (both as society's acceptance of sport as a lifestyle and solidarity between athletes) and love (as in play - a "love relationship" to oneself - and as in friendship between

athletes). In other words, if practiced according to their ideals of fair play, sport possess significant ethical potential.

Within this perspective, sport can also be seen to offer recognition democratically; it is attainable for many of us and at many different levels of achievement. Not everyone can become a professional athlete or reach positions in society that are subject to significant social recognition, but most of us can achieve a performance level in sport high enough to experience play and “deep flow”. Team players and competitors at all levels find recognition in the forms of friendship, solidarity, and rights in terms of receiving their due according to the rules. The democratic potential for recognition in sport is something that should be further explored.

This contention should by no means be understood as a claim that sport realize moral values more or less by necessity. At the outset of this article, I pointed out the seemingly vast distance between sporting ideals and sporting reality. To me, it seems that Honneth’s theory of recognition is an answer to Morgan’s challenge to critical theory (Morgan, 1994). The theory of recognition contributes to new perspectives on sport not only by articulating its values, but also by identifying violations or disrespect, thereby initiating reform in the form of a struggle for recognition.

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## PAPER 2



## **Is there a place for love in sport? Reflections based on a case study from boxing**

### **Introduction**

Friendship between athletes, or the lack of it, is a recurring theme in media coverage of sport, in literature and in films dealing with sport as well as within the philosophy of sport. From a philosophical perspective (Hyland 1978; 1984) emphasizes the potential of competition as a sphere for developing friendship in striving together towards excellence. According to Hyland, as human beings we are both competitive and given to friendship, and in human play this nature is most visibly manifested.

A less discussed aspect in the philosophy of sport is if, and eventually how, it affects our relationship to ourselves: not only our knowledge of ourselves, but also our emotions and feelings about ourselves. Philosopher Axel Honneth considers recognition in three different forms, love, rights and solidarity, to be essential for acquiring certain ‘practical relations-to-self’ necessary for identity-formation, for autonomy and for enabling self-realization (Honneth 1995, p. 129). Receiving love, rights and solidarity depends upon relationships of mutual recognition, that is, inclusion in society through reciprocal relationships.

The case of Norwegian boxer Richard Kiwanuka will be used as an example to demonstrate the general points, as well as sociological and philosophical literature on boxing. Boxing is ambiguous: it can provide great personal gain, both physically and mentally, as well as a social network and support, but it also has an equally destructive potential. In combat sports such as boxing, athletes gain advantage from inflicting pain and sometimes injury on their opponents. Injuring another person in a minor or major way is, in fact, a means to secure the goal of winning the fight. Davis (1993, p. 61) sees boxing as ‘non-simulated viciousness’ and contends that boxing is an ‘intentional infliction of harm’ without the conditions required to make such infliction ‘morally intelligible’. The argument in this paper builds on a view of boxing as having other forms of meaning and value than hurting another human being. In line with Wacquant (1992), I am interested in the existential dimension of boxing. The assumption is that boxing has an especially strong potential for positive *and* negative influence on the athlete.

The question this paper seeks to answer is whether sport, in addition to facilitating recognition in the form of solidarity (Andersen & Loland 2015) and rights (Andersen & Loland 2016), can provide recognition in the form of love. More specifically, the article examines whether a form of elementary self-love is attainable through play in boxing. This is a dimension of love and the building of self-confidence that Honneth does not really discuss. Self-love as a form of recognition is not to be understood in a narcissistic sense but as a deep connection to oneself. It is a result of intersubjective stimulation, but it is more directed towards oneself than the case with Honneth's concept of love and in friendships. The claim is that when played at its best and in the form not of contest but of sparring boxing can be a sphere of recognition in the form of self-love by providing trust, care and a 'practical relation-to-self' in the form of fundamental self-knowledge. I take a step further and argue that, while boxing may have an especially strong potential for establishing self-knowledge, some of its core features providing this relation-to-self are shared features of all sports.

## **Case**

Richard Kiwanuka came to Norway as an underage and orphaned refugee from Uganda. Growing up in the north of Uganda, Richard and his family lived in an area terrorized by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Kiwanuka's village was attacked by rebels, and his sister, aged 14, was raped and killed. His mother and the rest of the family were also killed (Sunnanå 2013). Richard was taken to become a child soldier, but he managed to escape and came to Norway as a UN-refugee, 15 years old (Sunnanå 2013; Mullis 2014). Kiwanuka was seriously traumatized and struggled with adapting to a new country and the loss of his family (Stokke 2013). In Uganda he had played football, but he found Norway too cold for the sport. He started boxing in Bergen Atletklubb, and, after boxing for just a short while, he experienced improved mental health. Years later, Kiwanuka described how this experience built his self-confidence and made him more focused (Stokke 2013). In interviews, he has credited boxing with the recovery from his traumas (Stokke 2013; Sunnanå 2013).

In his career as a boxer he won the featherweight class in the Norwegian championship both as a junior and a senior as well as gaining a place in the national team (Sunnanå 2013). He also passed high school and went through training to become a child care and youth worker. In 1996 he initiated the charity organization 'Bring Children from Streets' in Kampala, Uganda (Bring Children from Streets 2012), and in 2004 he started the integration-project

‘Way Forward’ in Bergen (Scheistrøen 2015). Both projects focus on sport as a platform for gaining self-confidence and giving children the opportunity to experience mastery of skills. Kiwanuka has received many awards for his work<sup>1</sup>.

Kiwanuka’s story seems special. He has exceptional human resources and a strong will that have helped him overcome his challenges and contribute to society. Nevertheless, he has expressed a strong belief that gaining self-confidence through sport is available to and important for everyone, especially vulnerable groups. How can sport have this effect?

### **Honneth’s theory of recognition**

Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition is among the most discussed and influential moral theories of our time (Petherbridge 2011) and seems particularly relevant in discussions of the meaning and value to individuals of institutions and social practices such as sport. Honneth views self-realization to be a normative goal. Becoming a fully autonomous and individuated person depends on developing and maintaining certain self-relations: self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. They comprise what Honneth views as ‘modern ethical agency’ (Brink & Owen 2007, p. 1).

These self-relations that form a person’s identity depend on experiences of recognition: Honneth (1995) views them as constituted within and maintained through intersubjective relationships in three forms of recognition: love, respect and solidarity. These forms are present as ‘patterns of intersubjective recognition’ within different spheres of society: love within close relationships, rights as a citizen of the state, and solidarity between participants in social practices (Honneth 1995, p. 92). Receiving love is vital for forming basic self-confidence, being recognized with rights is essential for forming self-respect, and receiving solidarity is important to form self-esteem. These three modes of practical self-relation are prerequisites for the ability to perceive, express and realize one’s needs, goals and desires. Receiving recognition is therefore vital for successful subject-formation understood as a stable identity, autonomy and for enabling self-realization.

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<sup>1</sup> Among the awards he has received is the 2010 ‘Role model of the year’ from the Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion (Regjeringen.no 2010), and the 2013 ‘Equality Award’ from the City Council of Bergen, Norway (Bergen Kommune 2012).

To be recognized is, for Honneth (1995), a fundamental human need. Denial of any or all of these forms of recognition can have a destructive effect both on how persons view themselves and on their ability to interact with other persons. Disrespect initiates ‘struggles for recognition’ (Honneth 1995, p. 1). A struggle for recognition can be seen as a legitimate moral claim to recognition essential for one’s identity. In these struggles individuals strive to establish or re-establish a positive relation to self, other members of society and/or societal institutions (Lysaker 2011). A moral minimum requirement of societies is therefore that they safeguard the conditions necessary for intersubjective recognition in its three different forms (Honneth 1995).

### **Honneth’s concept of love**

Elsewhere I have examined the potential of sport in the recognition of solidarity and rights (Andersen and Loland 2015; 2016). The Kiwanuka case calls for other perspectives. Sport, according to Kiwanuka himself, rebuilt his self-confidence and helped him overcome traumas from the past. As such, Kiwanuka’s quest to regain self-confidence can be viewed as a struggle for recognition. From a Honnethian perspective, the situation calls for reflection upon recognition in the form of love.

To Honneth, love is the foundational form of intersubjective recognition (Honneth 1995). Love is, by nature, found within our closest relationships, such as the relationship between parent and child or other relationships of love and friendship. It is a relation of care, trust and close bonding and therefore restricted to a limited number of persons. It is located within the private sphere, since love is received and given as private persons. Love is essential for forming ‘basic self-confidence’, which is the basic ‘practical relation-to-self’ for a person and the foundation for forming trusting relationships towards other persons (Honneth 1995, p. 129).

Basic self-confidence is viewed as consisting of bodily integrity and a positive understanding of self (Lysaker 2011). While integrity refers to what is unharmed and intact, it also includes autonomy in the sense of being unimpaired; a person is free to express himself. A positive understanding of self has little to do with high estimation of one’s own abilities but is regarded as ‘...an underlying capacity to express needs and desires without fear of being abandoned as a result’ (Anderson 1995, p. xiii).

In his analysis, Honneth draws on the work of psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott. The earliest stage of life can be seen as a phase of symbiosis where the infant is totally dependent upon its primary care-givers to recognize and fulfil its needs (Winnicott, in Honneth 1995). If these are fulfilled, the child will gain trust that its needs and desires are worth expressing. As the child grows older, a gradual detachment takes place, where not all the child's needs are instantly gratified. If this process of detachment is to be successful, the child has to gain trust that its needs will be attended to, but it also has to develop an ability to be on its own: 'In becoming sure of the 'mother's' love, young children come to trust themselves, which makes it possible for them to be alone without anxiety' (Honneth 1995, p. 104).

In addition to the emotional bonds established through love, physical contact between child and parent is essential for the child's development. In experiencing closeness as well as secession, the child learns to recognize its own bodily and motor skills. These skills are the foundation for later awareness of himself as an independent individual. Bodily awareness and autonomy as an independent, physical being depends, however, upon a successful secession. Love is therefore an enabler. It enables and encourages the recipient (the child) to trust other persons' continuous loving care and to trust himself to exist independently of the mother.

Disrespect of recognition in the form of love is manifested as abuse or violation. The most fundamental personal violation is when a person is deprived of power over his or her own body. In the worst cases it can cause permanent damage to a person's self-confidence and deprive her of a sense of reality (Honneth 1995). To Honneth, disrespect is an essential notion because experiences of disrespect and/or violations instigate struggles for recognition.

For Honneth, social domination can only be adequately critiqued if we begin from the experience of injustice, that is, normativity can only be derived negatively, not on the basis of ideality (Petherbridge 2011, p. 18).

Pinpointing disrespect or violation is therefore vital to Honneth's method in identifying recognition.

Summing up, love is a relationship of care and is characterized by close bonds of trust between the partners in interaction. Receiving love enables a person to form basic self-confidence that enables him or her to maintain bodily integrity and to express his or her needs

and desires. If these vital characteristics can be received through recognition, then the recognition at hand is love.

In his discussion on love, Honneth also touches upon another result of the process of secession of particular relevance in the discussion of sport, namely *play*. Winnicott views the process of early childhood development as a process of secession but claims that this first secession is never completely fulfilled. With help from transitional objects (objects of affection, such as cuddly toys) the void left by the mother's absence is substituted by an intermediate area of experience that helps the child to cope: 'This intermediate area is in direct continuity with the play area of the small child who is 'lost' in play' (Winnicott, cited in Honneth 1995, p. 103). Building on Winnicott's findings, Honneth (1995) argues that the child's creativity and imagination presuppose that the child develops an ability to be alone. The close contact with his parents enables the child to feel secure and to create his own play world, which is a recapture of the earliest balance between outer and inner world (Honneth 1995). To be lost in play allows mind and body to be experienced as a whole.

Below, Honneth's brief outline of play will be further explored. While intersubjective love is contingent upon others' reciprocal emotions, to most of us play seems to be a less vulnerable and more accessible sphere. Being the other product of secession, it seems that if play can provide a similar self-relation as love as well as establishing relationships of trust and care, play can be viewed as a significant sphere in the development of this form of recognition.

Before exploring the potential for love in sport, it seems necessary to address an underlying assumption, namely the connection between play and sport.

### **Play in sport and in boxing**

The link between play, games and sport is a recurring theme in philosophy and history of sport (Huizinga (1938, 1963); Caillois (1961, 2001); Guttmann (1978); Suits (1988); Morgan (1994). While Huizinga and Caillois are sceptical of whether competitive sport can maintain an element of play, authors such as Hyland, Guttmann, Suits and Morgan are more hopeful. Guttmann (1978, p. 7) sees sports as 'playful' physical contests, that is, as non-utilitarian contests that include an important measure of physical as well as intellectual skill. Suits (1988) as well as Hyland (1980) claim that all game playing, including sport, is characterized



by a playful attitude, and Morgan (1994, p. 211) describes sport's 'gratuitous logic' as the delight in overcoming the physical challenges contrived in sport.

Both Hyland (1980), Suits (1973; 1988) and Guttmann (1978) point to sport's ability to create a world of its own. This seems to be in line with Winnicott's thesis on play as an 'intermediate area of experience' providing a relief from the strain of relating inner and outer reality (Winnicott, in Honneth, p. 103). Bearing in mind the tensions of modern sport, Loland (2002) maintains in his Fair Play theory that sports competitions are at their best when performed with a playful attitude. The potential for play and performing with a playful attitude seem to be inherent in sport, although not always realized. Loland's Fair Play theory is founded on a premise of athletes treating each other as moral agents entitled to respect (Loland 2002) and solidarity (Andersen & Loland 2015). There seems to be a particular potential in sport, then, to create a sphere of play and creativity addressed by Honneth and Winnicott.

Let me now return to the discussion of whether sport can be the arena for providing recognition in the form of love.

### **Can boxing provide recognition in the form of love?**

For boxing to be a sphere for recognition in the form of love it has to provide (1) relationships of trust and care, and (2) a relationship-to-self that is similar to basic self-confidence.

Analyses from scholars such as Lewandowski (2007) and Wacquant (1992) show that the different ways of practising the sport of boxing have different potential in meeting these criteria. Boxing can be divided into basic conditioning, sparring and fights (competition). In what follows, and with Kiwanuka as an example, I will take a closer look at these training forms.

#### **Basic conditioning**

In his study on professional boxers in a ghetto gym in Chicago, Wacquant points to the misrepresentation of boxing as a sport of '...punching each other silly on end' (Wacquant 1992, p. 237). Much of the preparation and training are done outside the ring and this basic

conditioning consists to a greater or lesser degree of the same five practices: shadow-boxing, hitting the bags, speed bag, jumping rope and stomach exercises.

Boxing in all its forms is hard, physical training, and, therefore, a boxer needs to eat and sleep properly, but awareness of the needs of healthy living is not enough. In addition to training, in many boxing cultures there is a strict regime of a certain diet (preferably white meats and steamed vegetables), boxers are expected to abstain from alcohol (and at times sex) and to get enough sleep (Wacquant 1992). These restrictions seem harsh but can also be viewed as a regime of care: of providing the nourishment and restitution needed in order to live life as a boxer. Sustaining and assisting the concrete practicalities of diet and restitution regimes may contain a significant emotional element. This is not emotional care as in love between two individuals, but it does entail care for the bodily needs of a boxer. The aim of most trainers is that the boxer internalizes these norms so that he or she develops a form of self-care based on the knowledge of one's own basic needs as a boxer. Kiwanuka stated that after boxing for some time, he regained his appetite and started sleeping properly (Stokke 2013). The strenuous exercise seemed to reconnect him with his body by recognizing at least some of its basic needs and desires.

Such a regime can of course be corrupted, for example by resorting to unhealthy diets in order to lose weight, by using prohibited substances, or by being treated by others (or treating oneself) as a pure instrument towards prestige and profit. Thus, any regime of care can be perverted to a regime of control and manipulation. For many adolescents as well as adults, however, a healthy regime can be a reminder of what is needed to sustain us. Often, and especially in affluent societies, there is an unlimited access to many objects of desire – food, sweets, alcohol, diversions. A (healthy) approach to sport involves knowledge of and care for basic needs, and teaches that these can be taken best care of by not indulging all desires. This can form knowledge of which desires have to be fulfilled and which have to be controlled. The training regime teaches the boxers or boxers-to-be that they can, and sometimes must, refrain from food or drink they would normally have (Wacquant 1992). As such, the training regime shows the boxers they can be autonomous agents.

layin' off the junk-food-the-hamburger-the-French-fries, *no sex* you know. I like drinkin' beer: no beer, you know no light beer, you know *dedication* when you gotta really dig deep down inside of you and go for what you want – you gotta say like “well no women this month,” you

know, an' no hamburgers. (Then, quickly, his voice rising to a feverish pitch as if revolted at the mere thought) You know what it's like to eat no junk food for a whole month, no Cokes or ice cream or chocolate cookies? *It be hell* wouldn't it? (Anonymous boxer, cited in Wacquant 1992, p. 238).

The quote indicates not only acknowledgement of the values of an ascetic lifestyle, but also what dedication can entail. As such, the boxer learns that some things cost more to achieve – but might be worth it, nevertheless. While showing how dedication can be learned, this quote also seems to indicate how easily the coin can be flipped: to abstain from sex for performance-enhancing reasons seems to be built on a myth rather than scientific facts and may also include disrespect for the needs of both a boxer and his or her partner.

In addition to the health regime of everyday boxing, Wacquant describes boxing conditioning as a '...genuine reshaping of one's kinetic coordination and even a psychic conversion' (Wacquant 1992, p. 239). By repetitive practice a boxer is able to reshape his motion pattern. The basic punches are '...far from being natural and self-evident', and it requires extensive practice to do them right (Wacquant 1992, p. 239). The physical drills result in an expanded response- and movement-pattern as opposed to a 'non-boxer', and, as such, they can be viewed as forms of expanding embodied knowledge. This reshaping of coordination and psychic 'layout' represents not just realization of athletic potential but self-realization: it enables the athlete to exercise bodily autonomy and expands the knowledge of what this autonomy entails.

### **The boxing fight**

According to Lewandowski (2007, p. 31), both amateur and professional boxing suffer from what he, with Elster (1984), calls 'suboptimal soft constraints' indicating that boxing fights do not provide optimal conditions for play. Lewandowski's theory is that competitive sport is an undertaking that seeks to restrict choice 'in ways that enable creativity and skill maximization' (Lewandowski 2007, p. 26). In boxing fights, both amateur and professional, the length of the rounds and the scoring system in which the infliction of pain and ultimately the knock out gives competitive advantage, provide constraints that do not realize the goal of maximizing skill and enabling creativity. In amateur boxing matches the short duration of the rounds as well as the rules on wearing headgear force the boxers to throw as many punches as

possible in order to score points. This prevents development of both creative and complex punch combinations, as most of the punches are directed towards the head. It prevents 'ringmanship', too, in the sense of ability to move around in the ring in a fluent fashion (Lewandowski 2007). In professional boxing matches the longer rounds and absence of headgear makes the boxers adopt a style where the aim is the knockout punch (Lewandowski 2007). This aim of just landing one big blow, leads to the same loss of creative and complex punch combinations as in amateur boxing. Moreover, Lewandowski points out that uneven matching of competitors in both amateur and professional matches gives much the same result: where amateur matches can result in a great difference in skill because very experienced boxers can be matched with newcomers, this sometimes seems to be the aim in professional boxing matches. Both amateur and professional boxing matches therefore produce suboptimal athletic performances because the rules of the match constrain the creativity and range of the boxers (Lewandowski 2007).

If Lewandowski is right, the fight does not fully realize the potential of boxing for play and the development of self-love. Nevertheless, Wacquant describes a state available through both sparring and the boxing match where 'body and mind function in total symbiosis' (Wacquant 1992, p. 246). This state seems to be descriptive of pugilistic excellence (Wacquant 1992), and can be likened to Winnicott and Honneth's thoughts on play: an intermediate area that allows mind and body to be experienced as a complete whole. Therefore, there seems to be a potential for play in boxing fights also, even if they might not be optimal (Lewandowski 2007). The potential for play in the fight opens the door to creativity and imagination: not only in finding out what constitutes the best achievement one can yield but also in expanding such knowledge.

Wacquant likens pugilistic excellence to that of being a competent jazz pianist. The goal is to achieve a 'flowing utterance' where an embodied practical reason is expressed (Wacquant 1993, p. 248). He claims the boxer to be at the intersection between the cultural and the natural, where instincts are triggered, regulated and transformed in accordance with the demands of the sport. The existential character of the fight places the 'lived body' in Merleau-Ponty's sense as the true subject of the practice (Wacquant 1992, p. 249). Disrespect of bodily integrity can involve being deprived of power over your own body, such as in the case of Richard Kiwanuka. Boxing, as voluntary commitments to both give and receive hits and to face another human being who might have the power to hurt or injure you, seems to be the

ultimate form of bodily autonomy. It gives the boxer constant confirmation of his bodily existence. Feeling and responding to each hit demands a total presence and is a constant reminder of one's own very physical being. This is not to say that other sports do not have the potential for hurt and injury; most sports have this potential but in different ways. What seems to be special in combat sports is that another human being possesses this potential and uses it as the means to win the game.

### **Sparring**

Sparring is the regular practice in the ring against an adversary, but where the goal is to gain experience and enhance skills and not to win a fight (Lewandowski 2007; Wacquant 1992). Lewandowski stresses the rich potential for optimizing constraints in sparring and stresses three elements as contributing to this optimization: 1) a governed choice of partner, 2) flexibility, and 3) mutual self-binding.

Governed choice of partner shows the trainer's vital influence on the learning curve of a boxer. Both Lewandowski and Wacquant stress the role of the trainer in the process of finding the right match for the purpose of sparring. Wacquant describes the choosing of partners as similar to the choice of a lover; weight, skill and style are essential for a proper match. The aim is that both should benefit from the sparring and that the risk level is acceptable. Sparring partners are chosen – the choice assisted by a trainer – in order to 'fit' the dedicated purpose of the day, whether it is to 'hold back punches' or concentrate on 'footwork' or defence (Wacquant 1992, p. 242).

Flexibility in the sparring matches means that the rules can be adjusted in order to achieve the goal of the training that particular day, for example, that only body shots are allowed, or the length of the practice can be adjusted to '...minimize the "wear and tear" on the boxer's body'. The first two factors, the governed choice of partner and the flexibility in rules, means that in sparring one can pair seemingly unequal and 'unmatchable' boxers: it is possible to pair pros with amateurs, women with men, and heavyweights with middleweights in order to 'further enable the creativity and skill among individual boxers' (Lewandowski 2007, p. 34).

The third element of sparring is that it is a form of ‘shared cooperative action’ aimed at realization of each boxer’s potential skills and abilities (Lewandowski 2007, p. 34). Lewandowski discusses what he, based on Elster, calls ‘mutual self-binding’:

‘...a form of shared cooperative action and practical improvisation designed to instruct one another in mutually beneficial ways, such as when boxers reflexively “correct” one another’s mistakes with controlled well-placed blows. In sparring, mutual self-binding fosters a distinct kind of reflexive social cooperation and creativity in which attempts at constrained maximization are often optimized (Lewandowski 2007, p. 34).

As Lewandowski indicates, it seems that sparring can be a good way to assess not only skills and abilities but also to be confronted with one’s weaknesses. While the possibility of physical injury is underlying every sparring session, the purpose is not fighting but cooperation: the partners are there to learn from each other and help each other to learn (Wacquant 1992). Sparring is viewed as a ‘working consensus’ where the trainer is monitoring the ‘fistic conversation’ (Wacquant 1992, p. 243).

Despite the fact that sparring sessions can sometimes be as brutal as boxing matches, Wacquant (1992, p. 244) stresses the ‘tacit norms of cooperation’ and the ‘antagonistic cooperation’ demonstrated by experienced boxers. In order to realize the purpose of the sparring, the boxer needs to cooperate and trust his counterpart. In the case of Kiwanuka, he has credited inclusion in the boxing club and his boxing practice as the reasons for regaining trust in other persons (Scheistrøen 2015; Sunnanå 2013; Vebjørnsen 2012). It seems prudent to argue that trust shown between sparring partners might be one of the elements in boxing that contributed to Kiwanuka regaining trust in other persons.

Wacquant (1992) describes the difference between sparring and the boxing match as facing a partner instead of an opponent, but he also stresses the danger. Sparring always poses a risk of injury, and it can even be a challenge to the boxer’s status and reputation. Confronting fear and possible humiliation or injury makes the sparring-match an arena for an emotional learning process. Harnessing and controlling emotions is a vital part of a match. Hurt must not show, nor fear nor anger, and sparring teaches the boxer to identify and master his emotions. This mastery of emotions does not seem to be suppression only; the boxer learns to recognize his own emotions and to master them in order to use his talents to the best of his ability, and

because this is done under risk of physical injury – albeit a controlled risk – boxers can learn how to do their best despite fear. When Kiwanuka first came to Norway he was tormented by bouts of rage and would get up in the night to shout and scream. He claims that boxing made him regain control over himself (Stokke 2013). In facing and mastering fear, shame, anger, resentment and other strong emotions, it seems that sport can not only provide an arena for learning to express and control emotions, but also an arena for re-gaining lost mastery.

In addition to recognizing and mastering emotions, a boxer has to build up stamina to endure pain. Wacquant (1992) describes how routinization of pain helps the boxer to master the first impulses of self-protection that might undo rational tactics and self-control, and leaves room for creativity. Infliction of pain can be a violation of bodily integrity, but in opposition to circumstances where the violation deprives the person of control over his body, the intention of the ‘economy of pain’ is to gain control over one’s body – even when it hurts.

The pain involved in both sparring and boxing matches seems to develop a form of ultimate bodily autonomy. The boxer willingly submits to a situation having all the characteristics of violation in a ‘rational’ perspective. For Honneth, a struggle for recognition lies in the attempt to correct a wrong; experiences of violation or disrespect can motivate a struggle for recognition. For Kiwanuka, the violation he experienced was so grave that it deprived him of his sense of reality and control over and connection to his body (Vebjørnsen, 2012). Willingly submitting himself to pain seems to be a struggle to regain his body, not only recovering control over and connection to it, but also expanding this autonomy in mastering new moves: learning and mastering new skills *despite* pain.

Sparring forces the boxer to develop his perceptual, emotional and physical talents. It ‘reorganizes’ the boxer’s perceptual abilities and habits in that he learns to filter out unnecessary information while concentrating on what is important in the ring (Wacquant 1992, p. 244). As such, sparring leads to an expansion of the boxer’s knowledge of what he or she can do. Lewandowski finds the greatest potential for maximization of creativity and skill development in sparring (2007). This exploration in sparring can be viewed as a continuous process of discovering what it entails to be a boxer, and, more generally, of what it entails to be ‘me’: to self-knowledge.

## **Discussion**

It seems that if play can be the arena for recognition in a form that exhibits similar features to love, sport can, under certain conditions (an element of play), be viewed as an arena for love. In the following section the three elements defining love as recognition will be discussed: 1) trust and care, 2) bodily autonomy, and 3) basic self-confidence. In addition, Wacquant's notion of flow (Wacquant 1992) and its possible importance to athletes' relation-to-self will be discussed.

Both Lewandowski (2007) and Wacquant (1992) point towards trust being an essential element in sparring. In order to realize the purpose of sparring (the awareness of weak points and enhancement and development of skills) the partners need to trust each other – literally with their lives. The issue of trust is probably even more important when the partners differ in weight and strength, such as middleweight versus heavy-weight, or men versus women. Also, where pain is such an intrinsic part of the sport, one has to trust one's partner not to inflict more pain than necessary. Trust does not seem to be a significant feature in conditioning; neither does it seem to be a part of the boxing match where the other boxer is seen as an adversary.

The care element in boxing is displayed through the need to take care of oneself in order to maximize one's skills and abilities, but, while care in loving relationships is part of the recognition displayed between two private persons with strong emotional bonds, care in sport can be displayed by a trainer or internalized by the athlete himself. However, a trainer's display of care does not have to be contingent on the trainer being friendly or fatherly towards the athlete – it is (or can be) a professional care, personalized in that it seeks to enhance the specific athlete's skills and abilities. Often, the goal of any trainer's regime of care is the athlete's internalization of this regime; the athlete is educated to take care of himself in order to better himself. Any regime of care can be perverted; boxing has weight-classes, and focus on healthy eating can of course deteriorate to weight-control and/or eating disorders but in such cases, I will argue that the potential for recognition within sport – play – is lost. According to Honneth, recognition will form subjects; it provides a sound identity and individual autonomy. Perverted care regimes are symptoms of a lack of recognition and of recognition gone wrong.



Love provides us with bodily autonomy. Through receiving love during the secession the child learns to trust itself to exist independently and to recognize its own bodily and motor skills. This bodily autonomy is the foundation for awareness of oneself as an independent individual. Boxing is the exercise of bodily autonomy in that the challenges of sparring enhance and develop the boxer's bodily and motor skills, but they also expand the boxer's notion of his own skills; the conditioning is meant to develop a repertoire of moves that reshapes his or her motion pattern, and since these motion patterns are unique to boxing, it defines the person that has such skills as a *boxer*.

These traits are not unique to boxing. Most sports have motion patterns that are particular to them and the mastery of these patterns reflects on the person's identity; mastering double poling and diagonal glide is necessary to define oneself as a cross-country skier; mastering overhand pass and forearm pass is necessary to define oneself as a volleyball-player; mastering the backhand and the forehand stroke is necessary in order to be viewed as and view oneself as a tennis player. However, I will argue that in boxing, and other combat sports, there is an element that is unique with regard to bodily autonomy, and that is that the athlete willingly and knowingly submits to the intentional infliction of pain by another human being. To Honneth, the worst violations of recognition as love are those that deprive the person of control over and connection to his or her own body. While boxing viewed from the 'outside' might seem like a violation of recognition in the form of love, Wacquant (1992) shows that at its best it is the ultimate display of bodily autonomy.

Another feature of recognition in the form of love is that it leads to the formation of a practical relation to self that enables us to express needs and desires. In order to express these, it seems a requirement that we can identify them; self-knowledge (being true to ourselves) seems to precede basic self-confidence (being true to other persons). Boxing in the form of sparring can provide a deep self-knowledge, not only of the boxer's skills and abilities but also, of his weaknesses or shortcomings. This is the whole purpose of sparring. In addition, the continuous infliction of pain adds knowledge of how one reacts when in pain. Being 'at the borderline between nature and culture' (Wacquant 1992), boxing provides a knowledge of oneself not available to most of us. Fundamental self-knowledge, understood as knowledge both of strengths and weaknesses as well as needs and desires, is a way of accepting oneself. This acceptance is a prerequisite for the ability to improve skills and become a better boxer. Since honesty and acceptance of oneself as well as one's partner is vital in order to improve, it

might be that this can lead to an improvement of these capabilities in other relationships outside the sport.

Within Honneth's theory, love and play are both results of secession between mother and child, and, where love is recognition striving towards both union with another person as well as being an autonomous individual ('being oneself in another'), play seems a more self-contained state in that it provides an arena for experiencing oneself as an embodied and creative being. According to Wacquant (1992), it can be described as a creative flow, not just in striving towards a best achievement but also, expanding one's notion of what a 'best' consists of. This element is not unique to boxing. It seems that such a state is available through all sports when they are at their best, that is, when they have an element of play (Loland 2002). This state of play is experienced as a state where the 'strain of relating inner and outer reality' is released and one experiences oneself as an embodied being (Winnicott, in Honneth 1995, p. 103). What seems unique to this state is that it likens to recognition. A person experiences him- or herself as a creative and complete being, but it does not seem to be an intersubjective form of recognition. It seems to be a form of self-recognition. In sport, this self-recognition is not set outside the sociality of sport (many such experiences would not be possible without competitors), but it does not seem to be totally dependent on this sociality either. Athletes performing or training in individual sports will also have access to such a state of embodied being. As such, this element seems to be inherent in sport in general and not only in boxing.

## **Conclusion**

The initial question in this paper was whether sport can be an arena for recognition in the form of love. Boxing was chosen as a case because of its existential nature. By being a dangerous sport entailing facing another person whose task is to make one suffer or physically put one out of play, boxing seems to put a strain on the intersubjective relationships we are a part of and where recognition is sought. Viewed from the outside, it has the potential of being a case of violation of bodily integrity; it can seem to be 'nonsimulated viciousness' that is not rendered 'morally intelligible' (Davis 1993).

For boxing to be a sphere for recognition in the form of love it had to provide (1) relationships of trust and care and (2) a relationship-to-self that is similar to basic self-confidence. The

examination of the three parts of boxing: basic conditioning, sparring and the boxing match, shows that the different ways of practising the sport of boxing have different potential in meeting these criteria. Based on Lewandowski (2007) and Wacquant (1992), it seems that sparring stands out in this regard: sparring can provide relationships of care and trust as well as self-knowledge, a relationship to self that not only seems vital for self-realization and autonomy but also seems to precede basic self-confidence. Self-knowledge does not just provide, it also expands, bodily autonomy. It seems moreover a prerequisite to have a fundamental knowledge of needs and desires (self-knowledge) in order to express them (basic self-confidence). This form of recognition available within the sphere of play is less intersubjective and more self-reliant than love as intersubjective recognition, and therefore seems to manifest a sort of self-love. However, self-love as a form of recognition is not to be understood in a narcissistic sense but as a deep connection to oneself. While boxing may have an especially strong potential for establishing a practical relation-to-self in the form of self-knowledge, some core features of boxing providing this relation-to-self are shared features of all sports.

Love provides us with the most basic structures in identity-formation and within this sphere we are at our most vulnerable. Therefore disrespect or violation of love can have a disrupting effect on a person. Intersubjective love is contingent on another person's reciprocal emotions, while play in sport can be an arena for a form of elementary self-love, providing fundamental self-knowledge, care and trust. Sport therefore offers a form of recognition vital and attainable for many of us and at many different levels of achievement.

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## PAPER 3





## Jumping for recognition: Women's ski jumping viewed as a struggle for rights

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With the campaign for women's participation in international and Olympic ski jumping as a practical case, sport's potential for recognition of individual rights is explored. In line with Honneth's influential ethical theory, recognition of rights refers to a mutual recognition between persons of each other as rational and responsible agents with an equal right to take part in the public formation and development of their community or practice. The argument is that women ski jumpers were entitled to compete as they had actual and/or potential capabilities and skills to contribute in the public formation and

development of their sport. Their exclusion was a violation of individual rights. At a more general level, sport is discussed as a sphere for recognition of rights. It is argued that the basic principles of equal opportunity to take part and to perform make sport a particularly clear and potent sphere for such recognition, and also for the identification of rights violations. In sport, rights, or the violation of rights, are demonstrated in concrete and embodied ways. It is concluded that struggles for recognition and individual rights are a continuous process in sport as in most other human institutions and practices.

With the exclusion of women from participation in international and Olympic ski jumping as a practical case, sport will be examined in terms of its potential for recognition of individual rights. As a first step, an overview is given of the conflict over women's ski jumping.

Jumping on skis is probably as old as the activity of skiing itself. In its organized forms, ski jumping emerged as part of Norwegian military exercises in the last part of the 18th century and developed as a competitive sport in the second half of the 19th century (Goksøyr, 2007; Allen, 2015). Although being dominated by men, some women took part. A first unofficial national competition for women was arranged in 1896, and in 1914 in the city of Trondheim, 28 women competed in a jumping event (Hofmann & von der Lippe, 2015). In the early 1900s, however, female participation was reduced. Due to standardization of rules and increased emphasis on adjudication of style, the impact and power of an all-male corps of referees increased. Expressing predominant sentiments and views of the time, female participation in ski jumping was frowned upon and perceived of as 'unlady-like' and even 'immoral' (Vertinsky et al., 2009, p. 30). Moreover, from a (male) medical point of view, the sport was considered a threat to female physiology.

In spite of resistance from the skiing establishment some women kept on jumping and received significant press coverage and public attention. Before World War II, there were several skilled women ski jumpers both in Europe and North America. Two examples of outstanding athletes are Austrian Paula Lamberg, jumping in the 1910s and 1920s and nicknamed 'the Floating Baroness', and Norwegian Johanna Kolstad who was active in the 1930s and nicknamed by an American newspaper the 'Queen of Skis' (Hofmann & von der Lippe, 2015). Kolstad was considered as good as or even better than many of her male counterparts. Still, she and other female jumpers were not considered eligible for formal competitions and were given the roles of so-called 'trail jumpers' to entertain the audience during breaks in the men's competitions (Hofmann, 2012, p. 252).

During the 20th century, ski jumping became even more clearly a masculine domain (Vertinsky et al., 2009). The sport had been part of the Olympic Winter Games since the 1924 Chamonix Winter Games but only for men. Lagging behind other skiing events such as cross-country and alpine skiing in which women competed from the early 1950s onwards, women were not allowed into national ski jumping teams until the beginning of the 1990s. International jumping competitions for women were not organized

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until the late 1990s. Even as late as the early 2000s the International Ski Federation (FIS: *Fédération Internationale de Ski*) exerted strong resistance against women participation. Arguments prevailed on perceived health dangers and lack of skill and physical strength.<sup>1</sup>

Gender-coded sports and gender borders are social constructions and matters of change (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Barker-Ruchti et al., 2015). Ski jumping being among the last winter sport events in which women could not compete, FIS leaders were challenged by female athletes and by public opinion. Gradually, FIS officials changed their minds. The first official Junior World Championships for women were held in 2006 and the first World Championship in 2009. This did not, however, convince the IOC. Despite the support of FIS, the IOC's Executive Committee voted to exclude women's ski jumping from the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games (Pfister, 2007; Travers, 2011). Neglecting the history of the sport, women's ski jumping was categorized as a 'new event' (Travers, 2011, p. 127). Moreover, the sport was considered unable to meet Olympic requirements on international representation among athletes, and on athletic skill standards. Vertinsky et al. (2009) have pointed out that the rejection came despite the IOC's own premise that any new sport added after 1991 had to include women or a women's class, and that the argument on lacking international representation had not been used consistently. Other sports with lower international representation and participation from women such as snowboard cross, ski cross, and bobsled had been admitted into the Olympic program.

In 2008, the decision on barring women from Olympic ski jumping resulted in a court case where 15 elite women ski jumpers from Canada, Norway, Austria, Germany, Slovenia, and the United States sued the Vancouver Organization Committee (VANOC) for violating their right to compete (Vertinsky et al., 2015). In 2009, the British Columbia Supreme Court declared that the IOC practiced sex discrimination by excluding women's ski jumping from the Vancouver Games, but concluded that VANOC did not violate Canadian law as the IOC had exclusive control over which events to include and exclude (Travers, 2011; Vertinsky et al., 2015).

On April 6th, 2011, the case took a new turn. After much public debate and with the steady support of FIS, the IOC officially accepted women ski jumping into the Olympic program for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. It seemed that the battle for women's ski jumping had been won.

The battle has been the subject of academic studies of several kinds. Scholars in sports sociology and philosophy (Pfister, 2007; Gleaves, 2010; Stub Nybelius et al., 2015; Vertinsky et al., 2015) have criticized

the 2006 IOC decision against women's ski jumping on being male chauvinistic and traditionalist. Laurendeau and Adams (2010) argue that the decision was based on traditional and paternalistic prejudices against women taking risks. Women jumpers were discriminated against as they represented a challenge to the traditional, binary gender-code in sport. Travers (2011) takes a further step and positions the conflict within the larger social and political contest of Olympic Winter Games.

The ski jumpers' challenge to the IOC ruling and to VANOC's role in doing the sexist "dirty work" of excluding women ski jumpers from the Games was a direct threat to the symbolic cultural power of the Olympic Games as a fair and level playing field. (Travers, 2011, p. 136)

Examining the VANOC-court case she points to 'tacit' but significant power discourses on sex segregation; on the Winter Olympic hegemony of 'whiteness'; and on what she sees as the driving neo-capitalist forces of Olympic events.

In a similar vein, in this paper the conflict over women's ski jumping will be contextualized as having significance beyond the case of discrimination of a group of athletes based on their biological sex. In the following analysis, the core of the matter is seen to be about basic rights and individuals' 'struggle for recognition' (Pfister, 2007, p. 64). Women ski jumpers were denied inclusion in a sport in which they were entitled to participate. With the help of Axel Honneth's theory of recognition, this thesis will be explained and justified. Moreover, and based on analyses of the social logic of sport, the more general topic of the potential of sport as a sphere for recognition of rights will be discussed. If practiced according to ideals of equal opportunity to take part and to perform, it is concluded that sport has a particularly strong potential in this respect.

### Honneth's theory of recognition of rights

In discussions of recognition and rights in modern society, philosopher Alex Honneth has become a key reference. His main work is *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (1995). Honneth argues for the existence of universal normative standards in that he views recognition as a universal fundamental human need and suggests that claims on fairness and justice stems from common, phenomenological experiences of disrespect, violations, and/or degradation (Pedersen, 2012).

In Honneth's theory, recognition comes in three forms and is situated in different social spheres of society: love in personal relationships, solidarity within civil society, and rights within institutionalized practices and the state (Honneth, 1995). All

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three forms of recognition are essential for developing and maintaining a 'positive relation-to-self' and formation of a stable identity (Honneth, 1995, p. 173).

Being loved implies that individuals' needs and desires are considered worthy of being heard, and contributes to self-confidence. Recognition as solidarity is an appreciation of individual skills and abilities as contributions to a shared practice and enables an individual to view her- or himself as unique. This contributes to self-esteem. Rights refer to claims an individual legitimately can expect society to fulfill, because as a member of the community s/he has an equal right to participate in its institutional order. In recognizing rights, there is a mutual recognition among persons of each other as rational and responsible agents with an equal right to take part in the public formation and development of their community. This entails the view of an individual as a generalized being who inhabits the necessary criteria for participation in what Habermas calls a community's 'discursive will-formation' (Anderson, 1995, p. xv). To Honneth, recognition in terms of rights is crucial for the development of self-respect.

Lack of recognition influences individuals in negative ways. Not experiencing being loved challenges self-confidence, lacking solidarity challenges self-esteem, and violation of rights can reduce individuals' self-respect. Where recognition is not found, 'struggles for recognition' can arise in the form of moral claims trying to rectify social injustice and what is morally wrong (Honneth, 1995). The thesis here is that the exclusion of women ski jumpers was a violation against each athlete's individual rights and reduced each athlete's potential for developing self-respect. To further explore and justify the thesis we will take a closer look at the social logic of sport.

### Sport, equality of opportunity, and rights

Historians portray the development of modern sport as a process of 'sportification' in which performance capabilities and merit become the only critical variable of eligibility (Goksøyr, 1994, 2005). According to Guttmann (1978), a core characteristic of modern sport is a quest for equality of opportunity. The quest is twofold. A first part is that, ideally, everyone should be given an equal opportunity to take part. Sport should not be exclusive to the few. Historically, there have been significant challenges to this ideal. Guttmann (1978) emphasizes three main areas; (a) the ban in the time of amateurism on 'professional' athletes; (b) the ban on women in sport; and (c) exclusion of individuals and groups from sport on the grounds of skin color and/or religion. Gradually, however, in modern sport as in modern society long-term struggles for recognition has opened sport to all

those who want to take part. Generally speaking, the exclusion of professionals or open discrimination of athletes based on biological sex, color of skin, and/or religion belongs to the past. However, as the women ski jumping example illustrates, views justifying exclusion of some groups seem to prevail in some sport institutions (Laurendeau & Adams, 2010; Travers, 2011).

Secondly, the quest for equality of opportunity relates to fair and equal possibility for all participants to perform. All sports have rules to make possible measuring, comparison and ranking of participants according to a particular kind of inequality; inequality in athletic performance. Typically, these rules take the form of eliminating or compensating for inequalities in external conditions, for certain inequalities in person-dependent matters (classification of athletes according to body size, age, and sex), and for certain inequalities in system strength and access to resources (for instance by standardization of equipment) (Loland, 2002). These inequalities are eliminated or compensated for as they cannot be influenced or controlled by individuals in any significant way, and as individuals cannot be claimed responsible for them. Typically, athletic performances are associated with individual and team meritocracy and understood as results of talent and own efforts.

At a more general level, the quest for equal opportunity indicates a view in modern sport of athletes as generalized beings who are to be judged fairly according to their skills and their capabilities of contributing to the practice. In other words, and returning to Honneth's terminology, providing individuals in sport with equal opportunity to take part and perform indicates recognition of their rights. Actually, with its concrete, embodied criteria for participation and performance, and with its clear rule structures, sport seems to be a particularly potent area for recognizing rights, and also for identifying rights violations.

A return to the women ski jumping case will further illustrate this point. Do women have a right to take part in ski jumping? A closer look at the social logic of sport provides answers. Clearly, excluding women from ski jumping violates the ideal of equal opportunity to take part. Moreover, there seems to be no justification for excluding women based on the ideal of equality of opportunity to perform. The conflict deals primarily with person-dependent matters and perceived inequalities in performance potential and skills between men and women. The history of ski jumping illustrates well that women can master the sport. It may be the case that women should not compete against men, but there seems to be no sound argument in terms of lack of actual and potential skills and competence against establishing a women's class.

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Another aspect of the discussion is whether sex classification in ski jumping really is necessary. Interestingly, both Johanna Kolstad in the 1930s and some of the female ski jumpers of the 2008 VANOC case, among them Norwegian Anette Sagen and United States's Lindsey Van, were as skilled as several male jumpers and even performed better than some of their male counterparts (Aftenposten, 2004; Laurendeau & Adams, 2010; Travers, 2011). Actually, if the third requirement on equal access to resources is followed, women get the same possibilities for training and performance development as men. It may then appear that ski jumping is a sport in which there are no relevant inequalities in performance potential between the sexes and where sex classification is unjustified.

This idea is explored in more detail by Hämäläinen (2014) who compares ski jumping with ski flying. The case for inclusion of women in the non-Olympic sport of ski flying is even stronger. As the term indicates, and even more than in ski jumping, ski flying is about the ability to glide through the air. Elite athletes have low body mass and a talent for optimal flying positions. In ski jumping, Hämäläinen suggests sex-integration by differentiating starting gates for men and women (women would have to have a longer inrun due to inequalities in the potential for explosive effort between men and women). In ski flying, Hämäläinen argues for an open class with no modification. More generally, and in line with the argument in this paper, Hämäläinen points to the sports of ski jumping and ski flying as having an 'untapped potential to empower women' (Hämäläinen, 2014, p. 53).<sup>2</sup>

In any case, it is hard to see any other reason for excluding women ski jumpers from competition than a view of the sport as a men's domain. The exclusion was an obvious expression of unjust sex discrimination. Moreover, in Honneth's scheme of thought, excluding women from ski jumping and hence denying them to take part in the public formation and development of their sport represents a violation against individual rights. In short, women were denied recognition in their sport.

### The potential of sport in recognizing rights

Recognition refers not only to be viewed as a person with certain qualities, but a positive affirmation of a person. Such positive affirmation is essential in the forming a positive self-image and in confirming and establishing personal identity (Anderson, 1995; Pedersen, 2009). Lack of positive affirmation can motivate 'struggles for recognition' (Honneth, 1995), that is, political statements connected with action. Conflicts like the one on women ski jumping cannot be understood just as conflicts of interests, but are

morally motivated struggles in which individuals and groups seek to restore rights violations. Looking beyond the campaign for women's ski jumping, one might ask about the potential of sport in this respect.

In an article on transsexuals in sport, Coggon et al. (2008) argue that in real life most athletes do not have the power to change rules as they are bound by 'the consensual participation in a game with agreed, binding rules that are known from the beginning' (2008, p. 7). The view seems to presuppose that athletes' potential for participation in the will-formation and development of sport is small.

There are, however, alternative interpretations. Sporting games are developed in discourses on rules outside of the competitive setting but also in the very activity of competing. Loland and McNamee (2000, p. 75) view competition as a verbal and embodied discourse in which various interpretations of the rules are 'presented, challenged, and negotiated'. A happy or an annoyed gesture after a referee evaluation of a ski jump, or a hard tackle in a football match, can be viewed as 'micro-discourses' of an ongoing interpretation and re-interpretation of the rules.

Such micro-discourses rarely lead to radical change, but the accumulation over time may have significant impact in the development of rules, training, and competition a sport. Sometimes, however, one single performance can lead to radical change. In the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, Dick Fosbury's height jump technique changed the sport radically. In the mid-1980s, Swedish ski jumper Jan Boklöv introduced the so-called V-style and challenged and revolutionized the aesthetic norms of the sport. Cross-country skier Petter Northug challenged the ethos of competition with controversial tactical choices and finishing style. By opening for women's ski jumping, women are accepted as legitimate sport participants and as persons able to 'raise and defend claims' (Anderson, 1995, p.xv) in a discursive formation and development of their sport.

These are examples of athlete possibilities of changing sports from within. Other developments indicate that athletes play an increasingly important role in sport developments outside of competitions. Laurendeau and Adams (2010) portray the women jumpers' court case against VANOC as a sign of resistance, which in Honneth's terminology is referred to as a struggle for recognition. In most sports, athletes are consulted when it comes to changes of rules and policies. The IOC has had an Athletes' Commission since 1981, and most international and national federations have similar bodies for athlete consultation. Even more importantly, and as was clearly demonstrated in the ski jumping case, developments of electronic mass media and social media have empowered athletes significantly. In

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most controversial policy issues athletes are consulted by the mass media and can communicate their views in the public sphere. It is reasonable to assume that athletes' participation in public discourse has stronger potential impact than ever.

With its clear and concrete ideals on equal opportunity to take part and to perform, sport provides a good case for identifying violation of rights and also for recognizing rights. Moreover, discourses on rights in sport may stimulate a general interest in and understanding of rights issues in other social spheres and in society at large. The social and moral significance of sport should not be underestimated.

### Recognizing rights and development of self-respect

Still one may wonder whether the social and moral significance of sport is primarily symbolic in kind. Sport might be a showcase where rights and their violations emerge in particularly clear ways, but does not carry the weight of more important institutions of society such as education, or professional life.

On closer inspection, however, this view has to be modified. To elite athletes sport is a profession. In the same way that rights matter in other parts of professional life, rights matter in sport. But even to the amateur and devoted spectator, sport seems to be of considerable moral importance. In Honneth's scheme, lack of recognition has moral significance in all spheres of life. He points at how denial of rights – manifested as exclusion from a shared practice, such as sport – can influence a person negatively in fundamental matters of self-respect (Honneth, 1995). No wonder, then, that the United Nations (UN) views participation in sport and play as 'human rights that must be respected and enforced worldwide' (United Nations, 2015).

In other words, lack of recognition has costs of an existential nature. Recognizing rights means not only recognition of others as responsible and rational agents but also internalizing the same recognition of oneself (Honneth, 1995). The history of sport provides many examples of negative implications of the lack of such recognition. The struggle for women's soccer (Brus & Trangbæk, 2003; Fasting, 2003; Pfister, 2003) and ski jumping are perhaps the most familiar ones.<sup>3</sup> To the early pioneers of women's sport in general and women's ski jumping in particular, inclusion in the sport was not to be. With the use of women's ski jumping as entertainment or show before the 'real' jumping began, women's status as 'outsiders' within their own sport was underlined. Johanna Kolstad's family viewed lack of recognition within Norwegian ski jumping as one of the factors leading to Kolstad's isolation from society and alcoholism in her late life (Aastad Bråten et al., 2009). Just as women ski jumpers of the 1930s, women

jumpers of the late 1990s and early 2000s experienced that their athletic performances were deemed inadequate for participation. Instead of recognition of actual and potential capabilities they experienced the opposite. In an interview in 2004, after winning an 'unofficial' women's competition and not being awarded a medal, Anette Sagen expressed her frustration of the women jumper's being 'trampled on, time and again' (Sæther, 2004).<sup>4</sup>

A further comment concerns the point that recognition of rights also implies accepting limits to individual liberties (Honneth, 1995). Honneth's ethical theory of recognition is social in its very foundation. Rights have corresponding duties. Each participant has an obligation to treat other participants with the same respect that he or she receives him- or herself. Again, ski jumping provides a good example. In 2015, women do not only compete in their own class, but the FIS and IOC also organize mixed events in which male and female jumpers compete as teams. During the mixed team jumping in the 2015 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Falun, Sweden, the enthusiasm and joy of the teams were obvious and striking. Not only were all competitors mutually recognized in terms of rights, there seemed to be recognition among team members both in terms of love and solidarity contributing to individuals' self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-respect. In the discussion of rights in sport, ski jumping may be in a process of turning from being an *enfant terrible* into a positive example of athlete inclusion and recognition.

### Perspective

We have proposed that women's struggle for participation in ski jumping can be understood as a moral struggle for recognition. Pfister (2007) and Gleaves (2010) have argued that the exclusion of women ski jumpers was discriminatory. Laurendeau and Adams (2010) have argued that to the FIS and IOC women ski jumpers represented a threat to a traditional and hegemonic binary gender-code. Travers (2011) discusses the case of women ski jumping on the background of what are considered more extensive cultural problems of the Olympic Winter Games such as masculine hegemony, 'whiteness', and surrender to liberal market economy.

Our perspective emphasizes and explores to a larger extent the ethical dimension. Based on Honneth's theory of recognition, we see the exclusion of women ski jumpers from competition as a violation against their rights as persons and as a threat to their development of self-respect and formation of identity. More generally, we discuss sport as a sphere for recognition of individual rights and conclude that sport has a particular potential in this respect. In



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sport, recognition of rights and also violation of rights are demonstrated in concrete, embodied ways. If realized, this potential contributes significantly to the ethical and social value of sport.

Before moving to the conclusion, there is need for some additional comments.<sup>5</sup> Women's ski jumping is by no means the only sport in which sex discrimination and violation of rights is a challenge. For instance, women are still excluded from the Nordic skiing combined events, and men are excluded from Olympic synchronized swimming. Hopefully the approach and arguments presented here will be of help in a critical review of these cases as well.

Moreover, issues of rights and inclusion are not always straightforward. Firstly, the argument presented here is not that men and women should compete in identical programs in all sport events. In gymnastics, for instance, men and women have different programs. These programs may build on relevant inequalities between the sexes, such as inequalities in the potential for developing strength. The point is that both men and women should be given the right to compete where they possess actual and/or potential capabilities and skills to contribute in the public formation and development of the sport in question.

Secondly, neither is it the case that all sport events always should be open to every athlete who can contribute. Restrictions on eligibility, such as in the Invictus Games where only wounded, injured or sick armed services personnel and veterans can take part, or in the Islamic Solidarity Games for citizens of Muslim countries are not necessarily violations of individual rights. Among the aims of these events are offering arenas for a sense of community and a source of identity for people who have common histories and backgrounds. Still, even in events with such aims exclusion based on inequality in biological sex alone seems unjustified. A tentative hypothesis to be further explored is that exclusion from participation based on biological sex in any sport is a violation of individual rights.

## Conclusion

With the campaign for women's ski jumping as a practical case, we have explored sport's potential for

recognition of rights. Based on Honneth's theory of recognition, we defined rights as a mutual recognition between persons of each other as rational and responsible agents with an equal right to take part in the public formation and development of a common community or practice. We have argued that women ski jumpers were legitimately entitled to compete as they had actual and/or potential capabilities and skills to contribute in the formation and development of their sport. Their exclusion was a violation of each athlete's individual rights with potential destructive effect on their development of self-respect.

At a more general level, and beyond the issue of sex discrimination, we have discussed sport as a field for recognition of rights. We have argued that the basic principles of equal opportunity to take part and to perform make sport a particularly potent sphere for such recognition, and also for the identification of rights violations. Rights, or the violation of rights, are demonstrated in concrete, embodied ways. The case of women's ski jumping and the discussion of the logic of sport have revealed that recognition of individual rights is one of sport's most important values.

**Key words:** Sex discrimination in ski jumping, Honneth's theory of recognition, rights in sport.

## Notes

1. In Nordic skiing culture ideals of 'the natural' have been strong, and skepticism toward technological innovation and women participation significant. For an overview of the discourse in cross-country skiing, see Svensson (2014) "Changing Tracks : The Battle Between Natural and Scientific Training in Swedish Cross-Country Skiing, 1948–1972" *Idrott, historia & samhälle*, 2014.
2. 'Hämäläinen (2014) discusses both ski jumping and ski flying.
3. For more on women's soccer, see: *Soccer & Society*, Vol. 4, Issue 2-3, 2003: Special Issue: Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking off a New Era.
4. Sagen's statement is translated by the authors.
5. We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for making these points.

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## PAPER 4



# SPORT AND THE OBLIGATION OF SOLIDARITY

**Wivi Andersen and Sigmund Loland**

*The paper departs from an analysis of the case of Michelle Dumaresq, a transgender female downhill mountain biker who experienced marginalization within her sport. The analysis is based on Axel Honneth's theory of recognition. The Dumaresq case is particularly relevant to Honneth's ideas of solidarity, which provide insight into the dynamics of social integration. Honneth's theory of recognition also provides a conceptual framework and a methodology that gives new perspectives on the ethical significance of sport. In the paper, an analysis is presented of the lack of solidarity experienced by Dumaresq. The argument is made that sport has a particular potential for realizing solidarity among its practitioners. Realizing solidarity however depends to a large degree upon that the rules of sport are perceived as fair and just. In the Dumaresq case, challenges to solidarity came from what her competitors considered to be unfair classification rules. Summing up, it is argued that, as long as the rules of a sport is perceived as fair and just, voluntary engagement gives rise not only to obligations on fair play but to a moral obligation on solidarity as well.*

**KEYWORDS** transgender; inclusion; fairness; classification; Honneth's theory of recognition

## Introduction

Michelle Dumaresq, a Canadian professional female mountain biker, was born a man but realized already as a child that her gender identity was that of a woman (Duthie 2004). Suffering from gender dysphoria (a diagnosis of persons with a significant discontent with the biological sex they have been assigned to and/or expectations linked to associated gender role), Dumaresq started hormone treatment at the age of 21 and underwent sex reassignment surgery in 1996, when she was 26 (Reifer 2002).

In 2001, she made her way through the Canada Cup Mountain Bike Series from novice via expert to pro, always being open about being a transgender woman. Experiencing inclusion in the female elite group when she first started racing, the warm welcome was not extended as she started to win races. Many of her competitors believed her to have unfair physiological advantages and protested her participation in the Series. After pressure from her fellow racers and confused of how to handle the new situation, the Canadian Cycling Association suspended Dumaresq's licence. In April 2002, and based on the fact that, legally speaking, Dumaresq was a woman, the licence was reissued with no restrictions (Reifer 2002). One month later, she won the pro women category in the British Columbia Cup Race at Mission, British Columbia. Some of Dumaresq's competitors in the race started a petition against her that was signed by a

dozen riders of both sexes. The race official denied the petition, referring to Canadian law on non-discrimination (Billman 2004). In 2005, Dumaresq won the Canadian Women's Downhill Championship for the third time. During the award ceremony, second place Danika Schroeter put on a t-shirt that proclaimed '100% Pure Woman Champ 2006.' Schroeter (who later apologized for her behaviour) was suspended for three months for inappropriate behaviour (The Vancouver Sun 2006, 03.08). Commenting the incident in a blog years later, Dumaresq calls it 'the day I died' (Dumaresq 2014). She also describes how she faced 'a fair amount of discrimination and intolerance' from fellow athletes and spectators during her years in professional biking (Dumaresq 2014).

The case of Dumaresq has parallels to the case of Caster Semenya, gold medal winner of women's 800 m in the 2009 World Cup. Her win was overshadowed by questions about her gender and complaints from her competitors concerning Semenya's right to race (Camporesi and Mauger 2010). By not adhering to a traditional perception of womanhood and by being perceived as possessing 'male' bodily traits, Dumaresq and Semenya were seen to have an unfair advantage. Instead of being included in a sporting community, they experienced marginalization in the sense of not being accepted and appreciated as eligible to compete by many of their competitors.

The treatment of these athletes violates commonly recognized ideals in sport of mutual respect and inclusion. Sportive ideals are articulated both in sport policy documents and in scholarly work. For example, in *The White Paper on Sport* presented by the Commission of the European Communities (White Paper on Sport 2007), it is stated that sport 'generates important values such as team spirit, solidarity, tolerance and fair play, contributing to personal development and fulfilment.' Scholars such as Guttmann (1978), Loland (2002), Morgan (1994, 2006), and McFee (2004) offer critical and systematic approaches to sporting ideals, in which they view sport as a morally ambiguous practice but with significant moral potential. From a perspective of the history of ideas, Guttmann finds modern sport marked by ideals of equality in the opportunity to compete and of creating a level playing field (Guttmann 1978, 16). From a philosophical point of view, McFee points to the moral potential of sport expressed in metaphors such as fair play and equal opportunity (2004). By learning how these metaphors are applied and manifested, sport can be a 'moral laboratory' exploring the possibilities of ethical principles in practice (McFee 2004, 129). In his interpretation of fair play, Loland (2002) presents a normative theory for sport competitions. In line with Rawls (1971), Loland considers voluntarily engagement in rule-governed practices in contractualist terms. According to Loland, voluntary engagement in sport gives rise to two obligations; one on rule conformity and fairness, and one on doing one's best in terms of 'playing to win'. Morgan's (2006) narrative on 'the state of play', a partly fictional and partly phenomenological narrative of sport, points toward significant moral potential. This 'hybrid narrative' describes sport as a social practice with the potential of practitioners expressing mutual respect and trust in a commitment towards shared values such as fairness and solidarity (Morgan 2006, 18).

Sport ethics is connected to more general ethical systems and social values. Loland's interpretation of fair play is developed within a contractualist, neo-Kantian framework, whereas Morgan's work is influenced by neo-Aristotelian ethics. An interesting but less explored parallel between sporting ideals and general ethics is found in Axel Honneth's theory of recognition. Honneth's ideas of solidarity seem particularly relevant in cases such as those of Dumaresq and Semenya. Their formal right to practice

and compete in their sports is protected by established laws and rules both in sport and society. Their right to participate however triggered discussions among their competitors on unfairness, manifesting a tension between fairness and recognition (Coggon, Hammond, and Holm 2008).

In what follows, we will argue that realizing the potential of solidarity in sport depends to a large extent on sport meeting basic requirements on fairness and justice and on being perceived as fair and just. In light of the Dumaresq case, we will have a particular focus on the significance of fair classification. Firstly, a brief summary of Honneth's theory of recognition and more specifically of solidarity will be presented together with his method of identifying moral wrongs and moral potential. Secondly, and based on analysis of the marginalization of Dumaresq, we will explore in more detail sport's particular potential for solidarity. Finally, and extending Loland's contractualist argument on fair play, we will propose that when we take part voluntarily in the rule-governed practice of sport, and if rule system meet requirements on fairness and justice, obligations arise not just of fair play but of a more extensive form of solidarity as well.

### Honneth on Solidarity

Honneth's theory of recognition is based on the assumption that modern, democratic societies have evolved through a historic process of social struggles in which there has been a decoupling of legal recognition and social esteem. The result of these struggles has been more just societies with increasing possibilities for individual self-realization. This process can be evaluated normatively by appealing to what Honneth calls a formal concept of the good or 'ethical life' (Honneth 1995). This concept involves all inter-subjective conditions that are necessary for successful self-realization and takes the form of three patterns of recognition within three different social spheres: love in close relationships, rights as equal citizens of the state and solidarity in civil society. Each sphere has its own internal standards for what counts as 'just' or 'unjust', that is, internal standards of what love, rights and solidarity should be (Honneth 2009, 254). Experiencing recognition in these three forms is a condition for developing a personal identity and a sound relationship to self, expressed by three distinct forms of self-relation: self-esteem (solidarity), self-respect (rights) and self-confidence (love) (Honneth 1995).

Methodologically, the forms of recognition are identified through instances of disrespect or violation. Denial of recognition points toward and helps in identifying what is being denied to us and instigates moral discussions that can be viewed as 'struggles for recognition' (Honneth 1995).<sup>1</sup> The struggles manifest an appeal to a recognized principle (love, rights and solidarity) against which their claim (bodily needs, lack of respect or marginalization) needs to be weighed (Honneth 2009). Denial of a form of recognition can influence a person by affecting the corresponding relation-to-self.

Use of Honneth's approach in the Dumaresq case starts by identifying moral wrongdoing which, we will argue, leads to identification of an unrealized moral potential of solidarity in her sport. Despite her isolation and marginalization within the women downhill biking community, Dumaresq persisted to compete. Describing her years of elite biking, Dumaresq states:

When I started racing I faced a backlash from many of the women that I was racing against. I guess this was not unexpected but I loved what racing brought out of me so I really wanted to continue. (Dumaresq 2014)

In light of Honneth's theory, we view her persistence as a 'struggle for recognition', that is, as a struggle triggered by a legitimate expectation of inclusion. The Dumaresq case can also contribute to drawing a clearer line between the requirements on solidarity and rights in sport.

Table 1 (Lysaker 2012) gives an overview of the three forms of recognition, how they influence our relationship to self, and the sphere and role in which they are given and received. It also illustrates various forms of disrespect and how integrity is affected.

For Honneth, love is seen as an emotional relation to significant others, by nature restricted to a limited number of partners in interaction (1995). Recognition of rights entails recognition of the person as a generalized being who inhabits the necessary criteria (moral accountability) for participation in the state's formation of will, for example by having the right to vote. Solidarity is the counterpart of rights; here the individual is valued and receive recognition because he or she is viewed as morally significant and unique (Honneth 1995). This is just possible if one is recognized as a 'unique and irreplaceable individual' (Anderson 1995, xvi), and not only as a generalized other as within the state.

Honneth argues that respect (as intersubjective recognition in the form of rights) is a necessary, but not sufficient form of recognition. In addition to love, which is the founding form of recognition providing self-confidence, and rights providing self-respect, persons need to be seen and recognized also as individuals. To develop a sense of identity, one has to be able to view oneself as unique and as someone who has something valuable to offer. Therefore individuality and self-esteem are linked.

Honneth views the development of Western democracies as a decoupling of legal recognition and social esteem, resulting in two separate areas of recognition; state and civil society providing the possibility of recognition in the forms of rights and solidarity. Struggles for rights and solidarity in modern societies can be seen as ongoing processes with significant ethical potential: '... legal relations as well as communities of value are open to transformative processes that move in the direction of increased universality and equality' (1995, 174–175).

Honneth situates solidarity within the 'horizon of values of a particular culture' (Anderson 1995, xvii), and not in the division of labour, thereby opening up the field of solidarity for groups earlier excluded from it:

**TABLE 1**  
Honneth's theory of recognition (Lysaker 2012)

Recognition	Self-relation	Sphere	Role	Violation/disrespect	Integrity
Love	Self-confidence	Private	Private person	Bodily violation/harm	Bodily integrity
Rights	Self-respect	State/society	Citizen	Lack of rights	Respect
Solidarity	Self-esteem	Civil society	Fellow citizen	Marginalization	Social acceptance

Note: Figure reprinted with the author's permission.

By situating esteem not in the division of labour but in the horizons of values of a particular culture, Honneth opens up the possibility of conceiving of the conditions for self-esteem as a field of contestation and cultural struggle for the recognition of previously denigrated contributors to the common good (Anderson 1995, xvii).

Recognition in the form of this 'post-traditional solidarity' (Honneth 1995, 179) is an appreciation of individual skills and abilities as a contribution to a shared practice. Solidarity builds on a symmetrical appreciation of each group member's contribution toward realization of this shared practice. For example, if competitors in a sport perform and compete according to norms and rules shared and respected by all, solidarity can arise. Competitors engage in an atmosphere of mutual recognition of each and every competitor's contribution and of each and every competitor as morally significant and unique. Recognition in the form of solidarity entails not just passive tolerance, but a 'felt concern for what is individual and particular about the other person' (Honneth 1995, 129).

Honneth (2012) links his concept of solidarity to Hegel and Durkheim. Hegel suggested that the capitalist labour market, besides supplying needs, also had a function of social integration because individuals' skills and abilities were needed in order to supply the demands of society. In order to be integrated, individuals had to conform to a requirement of contributing to a common good, namely the production of goods in demand. By contributing to the production, each individual earned the right to receive an income sufficient to provide for a family. In addition, the individual should receive solidarity in terms of 'felt concern' of his or her contribution to the shared practice (Honneth 2012, 65). Durkheim develops Hegel's idea in underlining the necessity of just and fair conditions for solidarity to arise:

For Durkheim, therefore, justice and fairness are not normative ideals externally imposed on the capitalist organization of labour, but constitute functionally necessary presuppositions within this economic framework. Without their existence, a sense of social belonging could not arise (Honneth 2012, 69).

Honneth stresses that solidarity is restricted by modern legal relations (rights) in that these present a framework the shared value-horizons are subject (Honneth 1995, 176). By pointing towards rights and solidarity as immanent albeit sometimes not realized normative features of the organization of societies, Hegel and Durkheim attempt to mobilize implicit norms instead of presenting an external critique based on 'a realm of higher values or universal principles' (Honneth 2012, 67). In a similar vein, there is a tradition in the philosophy of sport of emphasizing and articulating sport's specific normative structures. Morgan (1994, 2006), Loland (2002), and McFee (2004), among others, claim there are ethically significant normative structures of sport, obligations of fairness and of doing one's best and playing to win being two of them. Without a minimum of fairness in terms of adherence to constitutive rules of a sport that are considered just, realization in practice will not be possible. Without competitors' playing to win or trying to perform at their best, competitions would no longer be performance tests and lose meaning. Specific norms of fair play can be seen to form a base for an immanent critique of sport. These ideas will prove significant in the further discussion of sport's potential for solidarity.

### Struggles for Solidarity in Sport

In searching for the potential for solidarity in sport, we follow Honneth's advice in terms of starting with identifying violation/disrespect of solidarity and return to the Dumaresq case.

In the BC Cup Race in 2002, Dumaresq won her first race with a pro licence. Two of her competitors, Sylvie Allen and Cassandra Boon, led a formal protest against Dumaresq. Boon stressed the unfairness of the situation due to Dumaresq's perceived advantage of being born a man:

I don't believe, personally, that it's fair, says Boon. I just don't believe you can change the way that you were born and that you can completely turn yourself into the other sex. (Mountainbike.nl 2002)

After the race, Boon who finished 2nd and Allen who finished 4th petitioned to overturn Dumaresq's win. They wanted the International Cycling Federation (Union Cycliste Internationale; UCI) to exclude Dumaresq from competing in the women's category, and to establish a new category—'transgender'. Emphasizing that they did not want to exclude Dumaresq from competing, they pointed out that she should be excluded from the women's category because what they found to be an unfair advantage (Reifer 2002). Solidarity as recognition of a person's skills and abilities as contributions to the shared practice presupposes the existence of an 'intersubjectively shared value-horizon' (Honneth 1995, 121). In this case, the value horizon shared by Allen, Boon and several other bikers did not include the performances of Dumaresq.

In the film on Dumaresq's progress toward World Cup, '100% Woman' (Duthie 2004) the statements from protesting bikers indicate ambivalence toward Dumaresq's identity as a woman. This could be interpreted as biased prejudices toward transgender persons. It has to be noted, though, that Dumaresq's critics Schroeter, Boon and Allen later apologized for their remarks and actions and have expressed nuanced and tolerant attitudes towards transgender persons competing in sport. It should also be noted that they voiced what can be considered legitimate concerns. As Teetzel points out, even if 'the perspectives expressed may be viewed as politically incorrect' all competitors ought to be allowed to voice concerns of fairness and justice (Teetzel 2013, 123). Do the views of unfair competition hold water?

With reference to Durkheim, Honneth points to the significance of justice and fairness for solidarity to arise. The normative logic of sport requires fairness in the sense of rule adherence. One premise for the obligation is voluntary participation; another premise is that the rules are just (Loland 2002) One ideal of justice is equality of opportunity to perform. Should Dumaresq as a transgender person be able to compete in the women's class in downhill events in cycling? A critical evaluation of arguments requires a systematic approach to classification issues.

### Classification in Sport

The basic principle of classification in sport is that athletes ought to be given equal opportunity to perform. The principle has several areas of application (Loland 2002). Firstly, most sports have strict rules on external conditions. Runners run the same



distance; soccer teams change pitch half at mid time to equalize potential inequalities; in alpine skiing, the tracks are prepared regularly to ensure equal surface for all; downhill biking is done on a set course and all competitors are given one on-foot inspection and two training runs before the competition. Rules may also concern climatic conditions. On the 100-m sprint race, records are cancelled if the wind from behind is above a certain limit, in ski jumping, an advanced point system is supposed to eliminate or compensate for inequalities in wind conditions; in downhill cycling, bad weather jeopardizing the tracks may lead to cancellation. Secondly, to a certain extent most sports have rules to compensate for inequalities in technology and equipment. Throwing events in athletics lose meaning without strict standardization of the javelin, the shot put and the hammer. Most sailing events have strict regulation of boat characteristics. In downhill cycling, the frame, fork and wheels are submitted to regulation. A third kind of rules to ensure equal opportunity to perform is classification of athletes; what is referred to as eligibility rules. Most sports classify according to biological sex and age and distinguish between women and men classes, and between children, junior and senior athletes. In addition, some sports, such as boxing and weight lifting, classify according to body mass.

By looking at a series of singular cases, a pattern seems to appear. In events in which strength and speed are crucial to performance such as weight lifting and sprint races in athletics, sex classes have been established. The rationale is that men and women are considered to have significantly different genetic predispositions in developing basic bio-motor abilities of strength and speed. This common understanding is backed by physiological research (Cheuvront et al. 2005; Morrow and Hosler 1981; Nindl et al. 2002). Without classification, the skill and ability test would be confused. A female athlete's weight lifting performance ranked low in competition with men could, qua women, be a superior competition. In these sports, without classification athletes are not given equal opportunity to perform.

At a more general, philosophical level, classification in sport seems to have backing in a principle found in most ethical theories; the fair opportunity principle (Beauchamp 1991, 172). The principle states that we should eliminate or compensate for inequalities between individuals:

- if these inequalities exert significant and systematic impact on the distribution of basic goods and burdens, and
- if individuals cannot influence or control these inequalities in any significant way, and can therefore not be claimed responsible for them.

In distributing goods and burdens most developed societies follow this principle. Persons with disabilities are given extra resources, persons exposed to accidents or misfortunes are helped with various kinds of insurance schemes. Normative structures of society typically are reflected in sports. Although the goods and burdens of sport usually are of less significance, inequalities to be eliminated or compensated for are of similar kinds. Classification is based on relatively stable conditions in individuals with significant and systematic impact on performance that is difficult or even impossible (age) to influence by individuals and for which individuals therefore cannot be claimed responsible. Examples already mentioned are inequalities in biological sex, body mass or age. Inequalities in terms of genetic predispositions or talent, such as in the potential for developing strength, speed or endurance, represent to a larger extent dynamic

inequalities as they can be influenced by training and own efforts. In sport, dynamic inequalities are considered relevant. Measuring and comparing how athletes have developed such inequalities via training and efforts are to a certain extent what competitive sport is all about. Competitive sport is primarily meritocratic (Loland 2002). If however inequalities in stable conditions such as sex or body mass are systematically decisive of the outcome, competitions tend to be viewed as unfair. In other words, in sports in which inequality in biological sex and/or body mass exerts systematic and significant impact on performance, there is need for classification.

Sports are not consistent in their classification schemes, and controversial issues arise. Why is there sex classification in rifle shooting and curling? Why do we classify according to body weight in boxing and wrestling but not according to body height in basketball and volleyball? Obvious reasons are to be found in historical events and in the context of sociocultural values where these sports found their modern form. Leaving these more extensive discussions aside here, we will return to the case of Dumaresq and apply the fair opportunity principle in a discussion of classification and the potential for solidarity in downhill biking.

### Classification in Downhill Biking

Should transgender persons compete in women's class in downhill biking, should there be separate classes, or should sex classification be abandoned and replaced by alternatives?

An answer can be found by matching the relevant performance requirements with Dumaresq's alleged inequalities. If inequalities between Dumaresq and her competitors due to her transgenerness exert significant and systematic impact on performance, classification can be justified. UCI defines the discipline as follows:

Downhill (also referred to as DH) is a race against the clock in which the rider negotiates a succession of fast and technical passages. The participant must demonstrate courage as well as sharp technical and piloting skills in order to affront tree roots, banked sections, bumps, jumps and other natural obstacles along the way. Speeds reach around 80 km/h in the men's races and 70 km/h for women. (UCI 2014)

The course length varies between 1500 and 3500 m, and the race lasts from two to five minutes. It requires a bicycle with a robust frame, and riders have to wear a full-face helmet with a visor. There is also the recommendation of wearing protective body armour (UCI Cycling Regulations 2014, §3).

The physiological demands of downhill biking have been likened to that of downhill skiing, emphasizing the importance of effort from a static start. Lack of explosive power in the start can be compensated by greater technical ability (Hurst and Atkins 2006). In their article on power output, Hurst and Atkins point toward the weak relationship in downhill biking between cadence and power leading them to emphasize the importance of riding dynamics over power generation (2006). In addition to technical skills, upper body strength, especially in the *triceps brachii*, is required due to the position of the upper body on the downhill slope (Hurst et al. 2012).

Based on this information, should there be classification according to biological sex in downhill biking? One challenge is the very idea of clearly distinguished biological

sex categories. As Camporesi and Maugeri (2010) point to in their discussion of the Semenya case, and as Coggon et al. (2008) underlines in their article on transsexuals in sport, the biology of sex differences shows a complex phenomenon with many overlaps and ambiguities. Leaving these discussions aside, one tentative argument is that predispositions for developing explosive strength, which in many sports require sex classification, are not decisive to downhill biking performance. Endurance strength, dynamics and technical skills as well as courage seem to stand out. These are not stable conditions causing systematic and significant inequalities between men and women but dynamic qualities that can be developed with training and own efforts. If these assumptions are correct, classification based on biological sex is not necessary to fulfil the requirement for equal opportunity to perform. One possibility then is to compete in open classes. Men and women can compete together.

There is however in downhill cycling another stable condition that seems to exert systematic and significant impact; body mass. This is a sport in which gravity is the primary source of energy and movement. Everything else equal, increased body mass will improve performance. Dumaresq's critics point among other things to her weight and strength as representing her unfair advantage (Duthie 2004). Weight classification in downhill bike racing could be more relevant to ensure equality of opportunity when it comes to acquired technical and tactical skills than classification according to biological sex. Not only could weight classification increase fairness, it could also move discussions of performance away from contentious and ambiguous issues of biological sex toward what at least to most athletes would be less sensitive discussions on body mass.

This does not mean that moving away from sex classes and introducing weight classes are without problems.<sup>2</sup> Some philosophers, among them English (1978) and Schneider (2000), argue that due to women's weaker position in society's gender segregation is necessary and the most fair alternative in sport, at least for the time being. Responding to Tännsjö's suggestion to reform sport by abandoning classification based on sex (Tännsjö 2000), Schneider argues that elite women athletes are role models for younger women and contribute to changing our social views on 'what is appropriate and good for women to do' (Schneider 2000, 137). However, segregated sport inevitably leads to challenges of sex and gender verification. Reviewing the debate on gender verification, Schneider concludes that it is not clear why any criterion (chromosomes, genitalia, a way of life or medical record) should override the other. Jönsson (2007, 214) argues that 'the problem of gender discrimination comes with the gender categories in themselves, and not with the individual athletes who may challenge and transcend certain gender boundaries with their bodies and identities'. The relatively recent understanding of biological sex as belonging to a continuum represents a challenge both to the classification systems of sport and to athletes. The case of Dumaresq seems to illustrate this point.

In her thorough overview of the debate, and in line with our thoughts on classification above, Sailors (2014) concludes that abandoning segregation between men and women can be of value in some sports and problematic in others. She proposes four distinctions in this respect. The distinctions go between individual and team sports, direct and indirect competition, contact and non-contact sport, and amateur and professional sport. Provided equal access to resources, Sailors considers individual, indirect and non-contact sports as most relevant to mixed competitions. Downhill cycling meets all these requirements.

Sailors' forth distinction goes between professional and amateur sports. Elite sport is considered problematic when it comes to mixed competitions, as it seems to be dominated by male values. On the other hand, and probably due to socialization, the preference to compete in segregated classes might be even strong at lower levels of performance. In elite sport, realizing performance potential is the stronger driving force. It can be assumed that at least in some sports, quests for equality of opportunity overrule preferences to compete within one's own biological sex class. In fact, in current elite sport there are several good examples of mixed competitions. In equestrian events, men and women compete against each other as individuals. In tennis, badminton and ski jumping there are mixed competitions in which men and women constitute a team.

One hypothesis is that biological sex in elite sport is losing force as a marker of athlete identity, whereas performance potential is strengthened. As a changing, cultural practice sport offers various forms of meaning and value to its practitioners. Our argument is that abandoning classification or introducing weight classification in downhill biking would be considered more just than classification according to biological sex, and hence would offer stronger possibilities for a shared value horizon and increased solidarity among competitors.

### Classification and the Obligation of Solidarity

Classification in sport serves the function of matching competitors with relatively similar potential of developing performance. Together with rules on equal external conditions and restrictions on equipment, classification is installed to ensure that each athlete has an equal opportunity to perform. Returning to a contractualist understanding, voluntary entering a competition has moral implications. Based on mutual respect between persons, obligations arise. As long as the rules are just, a primary obligation is one of fairness; of keeping the rules.

In Loland's (2002) scheme there is also a second obligation of doing one's best or playing (according to the rules) to win. Together these obligations of fair play provide competitions with predictability and meaning (fairness), and with uncertainty and experiential value (playing to win).

In the case of Dumaresq, competitors did not really violate an obligation of fairness. They kept the rules. Nor did they reduce their effort and devotion in performance. They did play to win. Still Dumaresq experienced marginalization and a lack of solidarity. Dumaresq's self-esteem was threatened (Dumaresq 2014). Solidarity is a personalized response; it is social acceptance of a concrete and unique individual, valuing his or her skills and abilities as a contribution to a shared practice. In the Dumaresq case, several competitors experienced classification as unfair. Dumaresq's performance was not considered a valid contribution to the sport. Although Dumaresq was shown respect from many of her competitors, the lingering ambiguity about her possible advantages made her identity as a transgender woman problematic to some. This seems to be the cause of Dumaresq not receiving solidarity. Honneth's argument of fairness and justice as premises for solidarity seems to the point.

According to Honneth, solidarity requires a shared value horizon, and this horizon is essential for identifying contributions that could count as relevant. Classification in downhill cycling in for instance weight classes could adjust the shared value horizon of downhill biking in terms of a view of biological sex as irrelevant to performance. In Dumaresq's case, this entails not only that her participation should be respected and tolerated due to her right to compete, but that her skills and abilities that mark her as an individual should be *appreciated* by her competitors as valuable to the sport.

Honneth's concept of solidarity and the contractualist understanding of competitions sketched above point toward an even stronger argument. If voluntarily engaged in a rule-governed practice, and if the rules meet requirements on justice, participants have the obligations not only of fair play within competition, but of a more extensive kind of solidarity. This is an obligation of mutual recognition and appreciation of each and every competitor's contribution to the shared practice, and of each and every competitor as morally significant and unique. Moreover, an obligation of solidarity includes critical perspectives. As argued in the Dumaresq case, proposals on new classification schemes are legitimate if supported by sound arguments from the perspective of fairness and justice.

To Honneth, the development of modern societies has been a historical process with increasing inclusion of groups and individuals to receive recognition in the form of solidarity and rights. Sport somehow mirrors this process. Sporting solidarity represents a particular initiation of these more general ideals. In competitive sport, classification is crucial in establishing justice in terms of equal opportunity to perform. Hence, fair classification is crucial for solidarity in sport to develop and flourish.

What we have called sporting solidarity is the particular mutual appreciation and recognition among competitors of each and every competitor's contribution to the shared practice. Sporting solidarity also has the characteristics of Honneth's general concept of solidarity.

Honneth views struggles for solidarity as crucial in the development of new forms of distinctive identities (Anderson 1995, xvii). Struggles for solidarity are seen as struggles for individual appreciation and freedom from collective denigration. Instead of being evaluated as a member of a group each person can be appreciated as an individual contributing to the community or practice. Solidarity does not come automatically by eliminating prejudices, but a climate free of prejudices is essential for solidarity to flourish. Removing biological sex as a classification marker in downhill biking could open for more pluralistic and updated understandings of gender roles and relationships between gender and identity as well. Recognition of gender identity in the form of solidarity, as well as rights, is crucial in developing and maintaining self-esteem and personal identity.

If solved wisely the Dumaresq case can be of value above and beyond the sporting community as it demonstrates the significance of fair and just laws and rules for solidarity to flourish. As McFee's (2004) remarks, sport can be a moral laboratory in which more general moral principles can be tested and explicated in concrete and embodied ways.

### Conclusion

The Dumaresq case raises questions of fairness, justice and solidarity in sport. Dumaresq had a right to compete in downhill biking, but did not experience solidarity with a group of female competitors. Several of her competitors considered her transgender status as a source to unfairness, and she was marginalized. Parts of her competitors' protests took the form of harassment. Concerns of justice and fairness however, if supported by good reasons and presented in respect of other competitors, are legitimate. Another part of the argument was that the principle of equal opportunity to perform was being compromised. Dumaresq's persistence to compete despite her marginalization can be viewed as a 'struggle for recognition' and a possibility to examine unrealized potential for solidarity in sport.

We have argued that solidarity depends upon or at least are facilitated by norms and rules being perceived as fair and just. In the Dumaresq case, classification seemed to be the problem. Our tentative suggestion was to change classification toward body mass instead of biological sex. This change would to greater degree meet the principle of equal opportunity, and Dumaresq's performances would be recognized and appreciated as contributions to the shared practice. In our view, this would open for a modified value-horizon in downhill cycling and enhance possibilities for solidarity.

More generally, we have sketched an argument that if sport competitions meet requirements on fairness and justice, and if athletes are voluntarily engaged, participation gives rise to obligations of fairness, play *and* solidarity. Athletes are obliged not only to follow the rules and play to win, but within and outside of competition mutually recognize and appreciate each individual athlete's abilities and skills as contributions to a shared practice and a shared value horizon. The case of Dumaresq demonstrates the significance of fair and just conditions for solidarity to develop and flourish.

A development toward increased fairness and justice, and toward increased solidarity, would fulfil Honneth's criteria for moral progress. Herein lies an important possibility for sport. Honneth's ethical perspectives offer not only the possibility for moral critique, but always also for identifying moral potential.

### DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### NOTES

1. The title of Honneth's main work is *The Struggle for Recognition: the Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. (1995).
2. Thanks are due to two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments to various parts of the manuscript, for proposals on relevant literature, and for raising the point of biological sex as compared to body weight as markers of athlete identity.

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