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# Conceptualising the local experience in sport and development

Local perspectives from a South African community

**Master thesis in Sport Sciences**

Department of Physical Education

Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, 2015



## Summary

This master thesis was conducted through the Department of Physical Education at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences.

The topic for the thesis is sport in an international development context, often referred to as “Sport for Development and Peace” (SDP). An increasing number of projects aim to use sport as a tool for improving, for instance, social, cultural and educational conditions in marginalised or disadvantaged communities. However, in the literature, there are limited empirical examinations that take the perspective of the recipients. Therefore, in an attempt to understand how a SDP programme is experienced from the perspective of local community members one particular SDP intervention in a South African community is examined.

The study applies a qualitative research structure inspired by person-centred ethnography. I combined participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analyses to explore this perspective. In doing this the study doesn’t ask *if* SDP works, but rather *how* it works, and how it is experienced by community members who have participated in the program and those who have not.

The empirical evidence was collected through a six week ethnographical field work between October and December 2014. Document analyses were based solely on publicly accessible documents and were conducted mainly during the field work. The ethnographical field work with observations was conducted in a South African community pseudonymously named Madala Town and six interviews with individuals, and one group interview with three girls from the township were conducted.

This study demonstrated how local employment in the MCSC created trust within the community, as well as bringing in inherent knowledge of which strategies would and would not work. As an alternative to the use of Northern volunteers with sports experience, yet limited understanding of the everyday living conditions and cultural norms in the community, the findings presented here highlight the positive outcomes of local, qualified employees.

The results obtained show how donor-reported aims and the methods utilised in the realisation of these aims do not always match the individual's lived experience of SDP initiatives. Additionally, lack of cultural understanding from the donor's side may result in counterproductive SDP initiatives, where topics such as women empowerment are understood differently in the Global North than in the Global South.

Local voices involved in the planning process may contribute to a better understanding of what is needed and which strategies will work in the recipient community, and thus increase chances of success. From the recipient point of view, the SDP initiatives intended to benefit the community may be designed to address the community's specific needs, while employment in the community benefits the community. Furthermore, including local voices in dialogue surrounding the SDP initiative, and more specifically the curriculum to be employed, may contribute to creating a relationship between equals, as opposed to the often seen, neo-colonial, donor-recipient relationship.

The thesis concludes that including local perspectives and knowledge in the entire SDP process, from planning through execution, is of utmost importance for the co-creation of knowledge and the building of a relationship between equals.

A future direction for SDP research would need to address the complex reality of social issues because local perspectives and local knowledge can no longer be denied. Context-sensitive methodologies, such as ethnological work or Participatory Action Research, preferably over longer time frames than that adopted here, may add to the pool of knowledge. This may then contribute towards allowing research to generate a holistic and contextual understanding of SDP processes and effects.

## **Acknowledgments**

The deadline for handing in my thesis is here, it has been a long and challenging journey and I would like to start by thanking my supervisors Reidar Säfvenbom and Anders Hasselgård for their attention, dedication and seemingly endless knowledge in guiding me throughout this whole process.

From making my fieldwork possible I firstly thank all the participants both from interviews and observations. Thank you for sharing your knowledge with me and making this project possible. I will also like to thank the Norwegian Federation of Sport for giving me financial support so I could travel to South Africa and conduct my research. I am forever grateful to my whole South African family for their support and hospitality. I would like to send a big thank you to the Hans family for again opening up their home to me, and for their never ending support. Tosca Innes, I am forever grateful for your endless support, loving nature and for lending me the precious “white car”.

Liv Berit and Børge Midtlien, thank you for always believing in me and for your never-failing ability to be there when you are needed.

Finally I would like to try and thank my fiancé Sheona Noemi Innes. It is hard to find words for how grateful I am for your help, support, and knowledge. This would simply not have been possible without you.

Oslo 30.10.2015

Torstein Midtlien

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## Introduction to the project

The background and interest for this project originates from my first experience with sport used in a development context in 2010. As a sport volunteer working in a local NGO in South Africa, combined with studies in ‘Sport, culture and development cooperation’ at NIH, I received an introduction to the SDP field both practically in South Africa and at the same time theoretically through my studies. My first impression with the field of SDP was that it did not reflect my own experience from the field. My personal experience was that we were working on a project in which good work was being done. The SDP literature did not reflect the good that was happening in communities, instead being critical towards the use of sport in developmental initiatives. In South Africa I was part of a new and interesting project that generated local enthusiasm and positive attention in the local community. Since then I have understood the value of critical research and followed the different discussions in the SDP field. I feel that there is a need for more local knowledge and understanding in international SDP research. I was therefore happy when I was accepted to take my master degree at NIH, and got further inspired to get into the SDP field by Anders Hasselgård.

Most studies define SDP as a new and growing field. During the last decade, a large number of international sport organisations, governments and nongovernmental organisations have conducted programmes in disadvantaged communities in low and middle-income countries under the ‘sport for development’ banner (Kidd, 2008). This interest is often attributed to the increased attention towards SDP from the United Nations (UN). The UN, through their millennium goals and stating of 2005 as "the International Year of Sport and Physical Education", identifies sport to serve as a contributor to human development and social change. Sport is trusted, even expected, to work in a range of areas such as *education, health, gender issues, disability and peace* (R Levermore & Beacom, 2009).

The increase in organisations and practice indicated by Kidd (2008), has been followed by increased attention in academia. During the period after the “International Year of Sport and Physical Education” in 2005 the literature produced in the SDP field can be categorised as descriptive. Expressive studies such as SDPIWG (2007), Beutler (2008), Kidd (2008) and R Levermore and Beacom (2009) provide important contributions



towards opening up the practical field and giving direction for future research. This “mapping the field” literature focuses on examining the potential of sport in development goals and has itself been followed by more empirically-based studies on the impact of SDP. Such studies traditionally make a more critical examination of the capacity of sport to achieve the development goals identified by the UN. Some examples of the areas where sport is believed to make a contribution, as well as studies examining this contribution include: (a) *achieve broader health goals like HIV/AIDS* (D. Njelesani, 2011), (b) *SDP in education* (Burnett, 2013; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2012), (c) *the impact of SDP projects on individual development, and broader community development* (Coalter, 2013; J. Njelesani, Cameron, Gibson, Nixon, & Polatajko, 2014), (d) *Peace and conflict resolution* (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2011; Höglund & Sundberg, 2008) and (e) *gender issues in SDP interventions* (Jeanes & Magee, 2014; Samie, Johnson, Huffman, & Hillyer, 2015). The abovementioned studies typically include analyses that deal with *whether* sport works according to the intended aims and purpose.

In addition to these studies that deal with whether sport works, a new body of literature has emerged that focuses more on *how* SDP works. This category may be described as ethnographic research studying local perspectives of SDP in the environment in which SDP initiatives occur (Fokwang, 2009; Guest, 2009; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). For example, Lindsey and Grattan (2012) suggest that there is a need for more ethnographically-informed empirical studies on SDP in order to understand SDP from the perspective of actors.

The project presented is situated in this understanding of SDP. The project focuses on *how* SDP works through examining the perspective of local actors. One particular SDP intervention in a South African community is examined in an attempt to understand how a SDP programme is experienced from the perspective of local community members. In a qualitative tradition the project utilised person-centred ethnography with observations, semi-structured interviews and document analyses over a six week period of field work.

This master thesis is presented in the form of a scientific article and is therefore structured as follows. In the first section the article is presented according to the format it would be when published. Following this is an appendix (appendix 1) containing supplementary information regarding the theory and methods utilised in the project. Appendix 2 will

contain further supplementary documentation including written permission requests and SDF approval that the project was ethically viable. Shortly after the project is handed in as a master thesis it will be submitted for publication in an international journal, preferably in the *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*. If published it will hopefully contribute to the continuing debate in the SDP field, with local actors' perspectives on one side and broader structures of power on a global scale which limits the local actors' choices and opportunities on the other (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). According to NIH's requirements for a master thesis in the format of a scientific article, the article is written in English.

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# **Conceptualising the local experience in sport and development: Local perspectives from a South African community**

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## **Abstract**

In the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) field an increasing number of projects use sport as a tool for improving, for instance, social, cultural and educational goals in marginalised or disadvantaged communities. In the literature, there are limited empirical examinations that take the perspective of the recipients' in the local communities. This article is an ethnographic analysis of the local experience from a community in South Africa where SDP projects are being carried out, and investigates the locals' individual experiences. Prior to the 2010 FIFA World Cup in football in South Africa, a multi-million rand sport centre was opened in this community, sponsored by a western-based charity organisation and managed on a daily basis by a local non-governmental organisation (NGO). A six week period of fieldwork was carried out in the community involving participant observation, unstructured interviews and document analyses. The results obtained show how donor-reported aims and the methods utilised in the realisation of these aims do not always match the individual's lived experience of SDP initiatives. Additionally, lack of cultural understanding may result in counterproductivity in SDP initiatives where topics such as women empowerment are understood differently in the Global North than in the Global South.

It is argued that there is a need for research which seeks to understand sport for development from the perspective of actors in the Global South.

**Keywords:** actor-oriented sociology; sport for development and peace; local perspectives; person-centred ethnography

## Introduction

During the last decade the Sport for Development and Peace field has witnessed a significant increase both in practice and in research with regard to the use of sport as a tool for initiation of social change (Burnett, 2015). Five target areas for development through SDP initiatives have been identified by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDPIWG). These areas are as follows: youth development and education, achieving health objectives, gender equity, disability-sport and building peace with a focus on human development. However, the group is cautious about the potential of sport alone to bring about development in the target areas named: "*The evident benefits appear to be an indirect outcome of the context and social interaction that is possible on sport rather than a direct outcome of participating in sport*" (SDPIWG, 2007, p. 4). According to Kay (2009) the SDP field is uncertain both about the potential social impacts of sport, as well as the ability of research to identify such impacts. A debate has arisen within the SDP field centred around the potential social benefits of sport and how research can be used to validate such benefits. There are arguably a limited number of empirical case studies on SDP, and further focused, replicated research is needed. Such research will allow for reflexive consideration of both the proposed social benefits of sport as well as the voices of participants – a perspective that is often overlooked (Young & Okada, 2014).

The present study focuses on a sports centre in a South African community where SDP initiatives take place, in an attempt to understand how a SDP programme is experienced in this community from the perspectives of local community members. It is emphasised that this is not an evaluation of a SDP project, or a project overview to show “best practice”. Through a combination of critical SDP theory and reflexive research methodology inspired by person-centred ethnography, the local experience of community members affected by, though not necessarily involved in, SDP interventions is investigated. Using a combination of participant observations, unstructured interviews and document analysis this article doesn't ask *if* SDP works, but rather *how* it works, and how it is experienced by community members who have attended the program and those who have not. From a community perspective the article investigates the claim for sport for all, girls sport participation, and financial sustainability in SDP projects.

This article will be structured in the following way: we will describe the community and SDP organisation in which the study took place, following which we will introduce the context of the study in regard to the SDP literature. The findings of the study will then be presented and discussed in relation to the literature, before finally we will state our conclusions and recommendations for future research. As already mentioned, the aim of the study was not to focus on programme or discourse evaluation, or ‘best practice’; instead, the focus was aimed at understanding the locals’ personal experience and understanding of sport and movement in a SDP context. Hasselgård and Straume (2014) advocate for research to include the ‘voice’ of the participants, or actors (children, youth and parents), as such research may lead to a better understanding of these individuals with regards to their understanding of what SDP represents. This, in turn, may provide important perspectives regarding the effects and consequences of development interventions in communities, as well as how local communities perceive and use such interventions.

### ***Madala Town and Madala Community Sport Centre***

The field work was carried out in a South African community pseudonymously named Madala Town. Madala Town is, in a South African context, a small township with an estimated population of just over 50 000 people, mostly from a Xhosa-speaking background. Almost 50% of the population live below the poverty line and approximately one in five people are living with HIV/AIDS (Protected source). In the author’s personal experience the township was a mixture of different social classes divided geographically, with some areas being visibly poorer than others. Madala Town deals with challenges typically identified in South African townships, i.e. a high crime rate, high incidence of teenage pregnancy and high rate of drug abuse. The SDP intervention for the study is based in a sport centre pseudonymously called Madala Community Sport Centre (MCSC), which was built in 2010. The MCSC was built by a charity organisation, but the SDP initiatives at MCSC are run by a separate non-governmental organisation (NGO). From the opening the MCSC was fully equipped with an indoor soccer pitch (40m x 20m),

basic conference facilities, offices and changing rooms with showers. Later upgrades consisted of an outdoor netball court and cricket nets.

### *Placing the study in the SDP literature*

During the last decade there has been a frequent call from policy makers, the UN and academics for an improved 'evidence base' to show the effectiveness and impact of SDP programmes (Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014; Nicholls, Giles, & Sethna, 2011). In an international review Langer (2015) argues that SDP studies are yet to find systematic evidence for the effectiveness of SDP initiatives, but despite this sport is still assumed to achieve a host of developmental objectives. This has led to a debate within the sport for development field, wherein some scholars call for hard evidence and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of sport for development interventions (e.g. Coalter, 2013). Others, however, see these types of evaluation studies as an agenda for the reinforcement of global power relations with neo-colonialist motives, and instead advocate for qualitative research into the perspectives of local actors, e.g. Lindsey and Grattan (2012) (Langer, 2015).

Lindsey and Grattan (2012) is an example of a study dealing with local actors' perspectives. The authors use a decentred approach with an actor-oriented sociology, in which they claim that SDP scholars have overemphasised northern influence within SDP policy-making and implementation in two Zambian communities. They thus call for research to understand SDP from the "perspective of actors on the Global South" (Coalter, 2013). Straume and Hasselgård (2013) and Hasselgård and Straume (2014) highlight the importance of ethnographic studies on participants and their practice in SDP programmes. Their findings, coupled with those of Guest (2009), show how recipients of SDP initiatives do not uncritically accept discourse and solutions imposed upon them by donors. In such cases, participants in SDP employ local agency to translate sport participation into their own terms. This highlights the importance of actor-oriented research, which will additionally allow for a better understanding of the donor-recipient relationship in SDP. A limited number of studies have highlighted the importance of local voices in both the planning and execution of SDP programmes (Burnett, 2006; Fokwang,

2009; Guest, 2009; Hasselgård & Straume, 2014; Jeanes & Magee, 2014; Roger Levermore & Beacom, 2011; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). Findings from such studies indicate that the content of SDP programmes traditionally include male-oriented activities (Guest, 2009; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; J. Njelesani et al., 2014; Schulenkorf, Sugden, & Burdsey, 2013), which may exclude certain groups (e.g. girls) in the community (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; J. Njelesani et al., 2014). In such cases, the inclusion of local input in the planning of such initiatives may help prevent unintended exclusion of any group.

Darnell and Hayhurst (2012) use hegemony and postcolonial theory as critical lenses through which to look into SDP initiatives, yet acknowledge the importance of Lindsey and Grattan's (2011) emphasis on local agency in research on SDP initiatives. They further suggest that emphasis on actor-oriented research is complementary to their critical studies into the broader structures of knowledge and power. Such emphasis may help to identify and challenge inequality and oppression brought about by hegemonic discourse and neo-liberalism, which is often reflected in SDP initiatives (Darnell, 2012). In (Frisby, Maguire, & Reid, 2009) it is argued that "theories are essential to individual and collective well-being and survival because they enable us to create frameworks for making sense of the physical, spiritual, and social worlds and for envisioning meaningful actions for social change" (p. 15). While Darnell and Hayhurst focus on hegemony and postcolonial theory, they acknowledge that these are not the only critical lenses through which to look at the study of SDP.

In their article *Education for social change? A Freirean critique of sport for development and peace*, Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) highlight the importance of the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire in the study of SDP due to the fact that current pedagogical approaches used in the SDP field are not capable of initiating profound social change at the community level. According to the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire, 'education either functions as an instrument, which is used to serve the interests of dominant social groups and reproduce structures of domination or sides with the interests of the oppressed to become the practice of freedom and social change' (Freire, 2005/1970). According to Spaaij and Jeanes (2012), from a Freirean perspective, the intention of seeking to allow recipients to participate in SDP within existing social, economic and political spheres constitutes an attempt to control such recipients, thereby reproducing existing status quo and reinforcing neo-colonialism. Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) highlight how Freire's critical pedagogy may



be used to challenge the existing status quo and help marginalised or oppressed groups to enhance their agency – goals that are key in SDP initiatives.

## **Research design and methods**

The present study is based on analysis of the relationship between residents of Madala town and the SDP initiatives that take place at the Madala Town Community Sport Center. The fieldwork was conducted in Madala Town, South Africa, employing a combination of interviews, observations and document research. For the field work a person-centred ethnographical approach was employed. LeVine (1982) contrasts standard and person-centred ethnographies by describing the former as analogous to a map of a community, while the latter provides a more intimate idea of what life is like within the community. Person-centred ethnography has primary focus on the individual and how an individual's experience is shaped by social and cultural processes, which allows for an investigation into the complex interrelationships between individuals and their social, material and symbolic context Hollan (1997). Such broad-scope methodology is useful in all fields of social science (Levy & Hollan, 2015) as it provides a means of basing anthropological theory in the personal experience of living people (Hollan, 2001). For example, Stevens, O'Connor, Garrison, Jocuns, and Amos (2008) use person-centred ethnography in the field of engineering education. From a SDP point of view this allows for enhancing the understanding of development policy and discourse in the context of the point of view of the individuals for whom SDP programmes are designed to benefit.

Field work was conducted in a particular community in South Africa between October and December 2014. The field work builds on previous personal experience in this community<sup>1</sup>, and is a result of reflection, drawing on insights as a participant insider. As an outsider with a connection on the inside of the community, an anthropologist can write from inside a community, SDP project or donor organisation as well as from the outside. The authors' previous affiliation with the community analysed in this study allowed for an insider perspective, in a situation analogous to research undertaken by Mosse (2005), who investigated a project in which he had previously been involved.

A basic document analysis was conducted in the beginning stages of the field work. Publicly accessible documents were retrieved from websites, social media, the local library and advertisements for sport events. This was foremost for a context and community mapping as a baseline for starting with observation and interviews. The field observations varied from attending both organised and unorganised sport activities in the community, sport activities organised by SDP organisations as well as informal conversations with community members both involved and not involved in SDP programmes. Field observations with a person-centred approach across a wide range of ages was essential for a full-picture understanding of how individuals experience SDP programs in their own community in the context of their daily lives. In total six semi structured interviews of individuals and one group interview were conducted. Three informants had previously been or were currently involved with SDP projects. Two informants were involved in sport activities outside the MCSC, but had never been involved with SDP projects. In addition one interview was conducted with a central staff member working in the SDP organisation. The group interview was conducted with three girls and had a primary focus on girl sport. All three of the girls had previous experience with girl's and women's sports in both a SDP context and local organised girl's community sport. The informants were identified during the observation period through both snowball and purposive sampling. The informants ranged from 18 to 21 years of age, excluding the staff member who was 40 years.

Jeanes and Kay (2013) outline issues of power between the researcher and the participant in this type of research, which often stems from the coloniser/colonised relationship that has previously been so prevalent between the Global North and South. After the work of Benatar (2002) in ethics of medical research in developing countries, Jeanes and Kay focused on communication and consultation between themselves and the community in which they worked in order to diminish the potential for skewed power relations. As the author of the current study had previously lived and worked in the community investigated here, a relationship with community members had already been established, allowing for the author to be seen as an external community member, as opposed to a foreign Global North researcher. Such a relationship proved to be both a strength and potential limitation in this study: a strength in that such a relationship with both specific community members and the community as a whole allowed for ease of communication between the author and the participants, as well as ease of navigation through culturally

sensitive issues. A potential limitation may have come from the author's previous involvement in the community, which had been through work for an NGO. This may have brought about the possibility that community members may still have associated him with NGO work and not as a separate researcher.

## **Findings**

The document analysis illustrates a traditional approach towards SDP in the MCSC. Sport activities, such as soccer leagues and tournaments, aimed at large groups were integrated in specific development programmes with a central aim to serve the whole community and offer sport for all. The development programmes were designed to build a stronger community and meet the specific needs of young people through focusing on increasing the number of girls and women participating in sport and leadership roles, disability sport, sport excellence, business development and education. These focus areas are similar to the main SDP areas identified by the SDPIWG (2007). Findings from the further research undertaken here will be presented in four sections: sport for all; girls' sport in Madala Town; SDP experience in Madala Town; and SDP, sustainability and the financial aspect.

### ***Sport for all***

Document analysis illustrated that a central aim for the MCSC is sport for all. This was intended to be accomplished through engaging people in sport activities such as community leagues, tournaments and set weekly activities which involve the whole community in increased sport participation. In addition, development programmes are integrated with the sport activities. These are designed to meet explicit needs of the young people in relation to numerous social issues such as better health with a focus on HIV/AIDs, welfare in developing self-belief and girl empowerment. However, document analysis shows that the MCSC is neither clear on a recruitment strategy for the young people in the community, nor on how to develop them. This is in line with research from

Coalter (2013) who argues that many SDP programmes have indistinct target groups, at the same time being vague about recruitment strategies.

A part of this study was to investigate how participants became involved in SDP initiatives as well as to put a focus on the young people that were not a part of the SDP initiatives. One of the participants explains his first meeting with the organisation:

*The first time I met the organisation was in grade 8. I was also involved in leadership in high school, being a part of a committee of sport, entertainment and discipline. The organisation approached the school and they came and spoke to us.*

Similar findings were also illustrated by other participants in interviews and observations regarding recruitment into specific development programmes. Interviews and observations revealed that participants who were not a part of development programmes and leagues, yet were interested in participating, found it challenging to get on the "inside". Furthermore, participants in interviews explained that reports from the MCSC illustrated a majority of users stemming from the immediate geographical surroundings of the centre, both in the development programmes and sport leagues as well as youth participating in unstructured activities. This resulted in a recruitment area and user representation much smaller than intended. One of the participants not involved in an SDP programme at the centre expressed her experience:

*I would like to know more about what's going on down there in the centre, I wish they went around and told people what was going on there. Like: "We are doing this, and we are looking for people like this". That would be nice, and people would be happy to go there. It is not everyone that just is the person that walks into there and starts asking questions.*

For the development programmes, the recruitment was structured such that everyone was welcome to join, but one needed to ask to be a member or be encouraged to take part by staff members.

## ***Girls' sport and parental support***

Document analyses and interviews revealed that girls' sport in Madala Town is a focus area both in the community and at the MCSC. The MCSC encourages both boys and girls to participate in all sport codes, though it is common that boys outnumber girls in most sport activities in both the community and at the centre. Observation data indicated that girls' and women's sports were failing in the community. One community member elaborated on his thoughts about girls and women in sport:

*From a community perspective, I think the local government has failed girls in terms of sport. ... People have tried to take care of the girls, but there is not much help, and resources to help them. The sport council in [Madala Town] is not very active. With an organisation like [...], you will expect that an organisation like that can be the saviour with those things. But I don't know, it don't look like they are making it. They are too focused on some certain individuals, and not the community as a whole. Many of the girls I know are saying that the sport centre is not a sport centre, it is a soccer centre, dominated by the males.*

Both male and female interviewees in this study identified domestic responsibility as time-consuming and therefore a potential restriction to girls' participation in sports, especially given that the girls are additionally busy with school. However, this was also identified as an excuse used by the girls who did have time to play sport, yet claimed not to because of potential speculations related to lesbianism when participating in sport. Sport in the community has a reputation for being predominantly masculine, and observations indicate that it is common to consider some forms of sport participation, for example soccer and rugby, as not suited for women and girls. The strong connection towards soccer in the centre might be a constraint in recruiting girls and women to play sport. As highlighted in the quote above, there is a tendency to focus on certain skilled individuals. Other interviewees indicated that if girls were not a part of a specific programme or encouraged to play based on their known ability in sport the probability of girls going to the centre with the intention to play sport is quite low. The lack of stable structures for mass sport focusing on women and girls, as well as the cultural mind-set

that sport is a masculine activity, potentially work as a barrier to girls who want to participate in sport activities at the MCSC.

Interviews with girls in the community revealed that girls often identify school sport as their first encounter with sport activities. Parents' attitudes towards girls participating in sport differs from attitudes to participation among boys. Young boys are often encouraged by parents and siblings to play sport, while girls may be told that sport is an activity for the boys. For a boy growing up in Madala Town, sport can be described to be a part of one's culture, as one of the boys involved with soccer at the centre indicates: 'As a boy you are expected to play sport, often soccer but also cricket'. However, boys in Madala Town lose support from parents and older community members as they grow older. A participant with a physically active upbringing explains his parents' attitudes towards sport in an interview:

*When I told my parents that I wanted to be a footballer they said no, they told me I should become a lawyer or a doctor, something like that. You don't see the whole family supporting their children in sport here like you will do in white communities.*

The cultural popularity of soccer in Madala Town is in line with findings in J. Njelesani et al. (2014) and Lindsey and Grattan (2012), as mentioned in the literature chapter, though in the older generation sport is looked upon as childish amusement if a player is not a professional. Young boys should play sport for their physical development, but upon reaching the age of 15-16 years a boy should take on the responsibility of being an adult. In Xhosa tradition, sport and games belong to one's childhood, and as a result boys often take a break from sport activities around the age of 15-16.

In addition to sports programmes, development and life-skills programmes were also offered at the MCSC. Interviews and observations have illustrated how adult community members were more supportive and encouraging regarding their adolescent children's involvement in development programmes than sport programmes. Participants that were active in the MCSC indicated that their parents were originally sceptical about their involvement due to worries about time constraints regarding school work. However, observations and conversations with adult community members indicated that this involvement of adolescent children at the MCSC was respected in the community and

parents encouraged their children to be involved. As indicated in the interviews, a further positive factor for parental support was that adolescent participants in the developmental programmes were well catered for in meetings and the programmes afforded them several benefits. These benefits include the opportunity to travel and attend skill-based workshops for free, increased respect and status in the community and an expanded network of contacts for potential employment later in life.

### ***Community opinion***

Personal status in a small Xhosa community such as Madala Town is especially important since the community is, in a South African context, small and people live close together. One of the participants involved in the development programmes illustrates in an interview his experience with the programme in relation to respect from adult community members and parents:

*It made me grow a little, but also my status as a person in the community. The programme gave us a platform to speak in public, in front of our peers and leading community members, elders and politicians. We spoke about how the development programmes and how it would affect the lives of the whole community. And that affect how people greet you, it gives you respect.*

One girl elaborates on how increased responsibility and support surrounding participants helped to improve personal confidence and belief in herself:

*Before I got with [the MSCS], I was doing things that I was not supposed to be doing at that age. I had a baby when I was 14 years old. In grade 8. At that time I was still a kid, and then the baby died. When [the MSCS] came in, I saw an opportunity, this was a good place for me. You get a confidence to speak to other people. And you go to the workshops, and we have to talk about what we want for our communities.*

However, in addition to increased respect in the community at large, participants also experienced some resentment from their peers who were not involved at the MCSC – a situation which was illustrated in interviews and observations. Young adults not a part of a specific development programme stated resentment at not being a part of the good work the development programmes had to offer, as well as envy for more material gains such as track suits, food served at workshops and opportunities to travel with the organisation.

Participants in the development programmes at the MCSC identified in interviews the importance of an inclusive environment based on trust. With good facilitators the development programmes created a place where they could talk about difficult issues relevant for the community such as sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and how to make good decisions related to these topics. Especially important for the participants was that they could talk about this with their peers, which made it more real than when it came from e.g. a teacher at school. One of the participants highlights the benefits of peer discussion:

*We also learn it at school. But youth always want to try things out and don't take it so seriously when it comes from your teacher, it is different when it comes from your peers. And the things we discussed there was real. Like what is killing young people. So it was a good thing!*

Part of the creation of a safe environment for such peer discussion included the employment of respected local community members as managers and facilitators of the programmes. One of the participants in interviews explained how:

*One of the main things that made the people to believe in this was the appointment of the manager ..., he was a very respected member of the community. He was known from when he played rugby, and almost played for the Springboks. And when then they also employed more people from the community they made job creation for the community members, and also developing our kids. Parents started to say: okay this seems like positive thing, it's not bad. So that's how we started to trust the organisation, and also because we (and me personally benefiting).*



## ***Financial sustainability***

The doubt illustrated by the parents in the quote above was also identified by interviewees when discussing how the construction of a modern sports centre was received in relation to the community members' expectations. One of the participants described the initial phase:

*The first question people here ask when hearing about something like the centre is that how will we benefit from this, and how will you, as the builder, benefit from this. You as the builder bring this here, and we did not ask for it. People don't like to be used, I think it has something with the history of our country and community too. Whenever a white person come, we have that mentality, we will not [be] take[n] use of.*

Further observation indicated that the building of the centre in the initial phase in 2010 created both enthusiasm and scepticism within the community. However, such scepticism was unfounded, as was indicated once the centre had been opened. The charity organisation dedicated the centre to the young people of the entire community, as an all-inclusive community centre and a facility for sport and development. From interviews and observations the employment of locally respected members of the community as staff was identified as a key factor that won the community over. This, combined with free-of-charge sport and development programmes and the provision of safe surroundings for playing sport served to relieve the doubt in the community.

However, an issue that came up often during the interviews and observations was the introduction of financial fees in 2012, something that upset many in the community. From the beginning the MCSC started up indoor soccer leagues for younger boys in several age-groups, and for senior boys over 16 years of age. The senior league in particular grew in numbers and popularity with teams and players representing most of the community neighbourhoods. As part of a financial stability plan, the MCSC introduced an entrance registration fee in 2012 for teams to enter leagues, and a team fee per game-night in the senior league. Interviews with staff revealed that the MCSC explained how the introduction of the financial fee was part of a five-year sustainability plan. However, the

document analysis shows that there was no mention in the financial plan that running costs for the MCSC should be paid by participants, but rather should be covered by financial grants, sponsorships and rent from third parties. From observations and interviews the introduction of a participant fee was upsetting since the MCSC originally was communicated to the community as a centre for the young people in the community where no fees would apply. The sudden introduction of a fee for the leagues was met with confusion and frustration, bringing back the doubt originally expressed by community members. One of the players who was previously a member in the community league before fees were introduced explains:

*I don't know what happen in the league. Before, it was fully packed, but now there is not like that. In each match the players must come with money now ... The centre did not explain to us what is happening ... Even if we have money, we don't want to use that on the facility. Many think the facility is built by the municipality or something like that. Why is the centre wanting money from the people, and what do they need it for?*

The community league was seen as something good for the boys. Many of the players were unemployed, and playing in the league, as expressed by an older community member, "kept them busy from the street", in reference to preventing them from abusing drugs or alcohol or getting involved in crime. Adult participants (not involved with the centre) emphasised the importance of a busy MCSC in interviews and observations. The community league was not only very popular among players, but with supporters from the surrounding neighbourhoods as well. One of the players who used to be a part of the community league before the financial fee was introduced elaborates:

*The community league was also good in that way. Taking those people that was drinking and smoking into the centre and bringing them into sport. Because outside, there are plenty of bad things. High level of crime, high level teenage pregnancy, high level of drug abuse. So bringing those into sports was like eliminating some of those thing, replacing it with something good.*

## Discussion

The aim of this study was to use person-centred ethnography to investigate how individuals in a township in South Africa experience SDP initiatives designed to benefit their community. By applying person-centred ethnography we aimed to highlight the importance of the local perspective in communities where SDP initiatives are being carried out. Our findings indicate several areas of discrepancy between donor-identified aims and local experience, and between donors and recipients in relation to the importance of local employment in building trust.

One of the abovementioned areas of discrepancy is in the availability of the MCSC to community members. The two main barriers for participation highlighted in the interviews were geographical placement and recruitment strategies. Coalter (2013) identifies three broad recruitment paradigms in SDP organisations. *Open access* recruitment operates with self-selecting participants and is open to all young people in the target area, often operating with the assumption that all young people in the target area are exposed to the same broad social issues such as high crime, weak self-esteem or lack of ambition. *Relative open access* recruitment is open for everyone, but has a more specific targeting approach to attract young people who are more obviously at risk. *Targeted outreach work* is a targeted approach with recruitment aimed directly at a specific group at whom programmes are directly aimed. The findings presented here from document analyses indicate an original intention for 'open access' recruitment into programmes at the MCSC. However the interviews revealed that potential participants are being recruited in a more specific manner, leading to a recruitment strategy that is closer to 'relative open access' or 'targeted' recruitment. In addition to this being an example of disagreement between policy discourse and local practice, the use of targeted recruitment is demonstrated in this study to have differing effects on an individual vs. community basis. In agreement with Coalter (2013), the targeted recruitment used in the programmes at the MCSC resulted in a build-up of trust and reciprocal respect between participants and facilitators, as well as an increase in the participants' self-respect and status in the community. However, in a broader aspect, the targeted recruitment strategy may be seen as a potential driving force for marginalisation, expressed through statements as "us" and "them" within the community.

A second area of discrepancy was seen in the aim for girl empowerment through sport. Similar to what was outlined by J. Njelesani et al. (2014) in Zambian SDP projects, girl empowerment was identified as a key aim of the initiatives taking place at the MCSC. However, while girl empowerment is stated as being of utmost importance, the SDP initiatives being undertaken in the community tend to focus mainly on football – a traditionally masculine sport in which girls have no place. Such focus not only marginalises girls, but also boys with less talent and boys and girls with disabilities (J. Njelesani et al., 2014). Speculations about lesbianism and a focus on football, together with a lack of support from families work as cultural barriers for the girls to actively participate in sport. Ignorance of cultural norms, such as traditional gender roles, in a community targeted by SDP initiatives may result in decreased programme quality and thus effectiveness, as may be seen in the initiatives to empower women in Madala Town. In line with the findings of J. Njelesani et al. (2014), some ambivalence between policy discourse and local practice when it comes to the empowerment of women through sport was revealed. Policy documents state aims to increase girls' participation in sports, yet in practice the initiative's focus is on a sport in which girls are discouraged to participate (football). With such ambivalence the risk is being run that the initiative is not serving the end to which it was intended and in extreme cases may be counterproductive (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). According to Spaaij and Jeanes (2012), and thus a Freirean viewpoint, the methods used to bring about girl empowerment through sport in Madala Town were not based on the girls' actual situation or knowledge about or from this group.

A third discrepancy found between donor-identified aims and local experience is in the way individuals understand and find meaning in their experience of SDP. While development aims for SDP often include empowerment and teamwork (Guest, 2009), such outcomes are not represented in how participants describe their personal experience with SDP initiatives. Most local participants spoke about sport as an amusement, yet those participants given responsibilities at the MCSC in administrative or information work noted that the acquisition of skills and experience from involvement caused further developmental effects such as respect from the community, personal confidence and useful contacts. On the contrary, the interviewees claimed that motivation for participation was due to acquisition of "free stuff", such as sports gear, clothing and food. Guest (2009) demonstrates that local participants in his study cared less about self-esteem

and team work and more about how sport may represent an opportunity for remunerative adult work or for reinforcing local values. Such an understanding of the use of sport as a road to ‘fame and fortune’ is echoed in the findings of J. Njelesani et al. (2014) in Zambian communities. Development aims put forward by Global North donors are thereby not always in line with participants personal aims as outcomes of participation in SDP initiatives.

The fourth and final discrepancy identified in this study was between the MCSC aims and the methods used to bring such aims into reality. By this we refer to the financial sustainability plans for the MCSC and SDP initiatives taking place therein. Interviews and observations indicated an initial scepticism for the building of the MCSC where no-one had asked for such a centre, with a central tenet being “will they take advantage of us”. Such scepticism was proven unfounded when the MCSC was communicated as a free space for everyone in the community. From a community perspective the MCSC was eventually regarded as a successful initiative that contributed towards positive development for the young people in Madala Town. One of the factors illustrated in the findings of this article is the value the MCSC has as a facility that "keep[s] the children busy". In agreement with the findings of J. Njelesani et al. (2014) and Lindsey and Grattan (2012), it was indicated by older community members as well as younger participants that time spent engaged in sport in a safe environment is time spent away from the streets where drug and alcohol abuse and gang activities are viewed as potential dangerous activities. However, the introduction of a financial fee in 2012 conflicted with the expectations of the community for the MCSC, which, from its opening in 2010 had been communicated as a free sport and development facility for the whole community. The introduction of this financial fee, especially in a community where money is scarce, served to reintroduce the initial scepticism and brought about a loss of trust – the community felt it had been lied to. The arguments put forward by the MCSC staff from a financial sustainability perspective were not understood by the community. Almost all SDP initiatives claim sustainability as a goal, with an aim that SDP initiatives would survive should the funding or resource providers pull out (Donnelly, Atkinson, Boyle, & Szto, 2011). However, as SDP initiatives generally take place in poorer communities, financial sustainability plans need to be relatively concrete to prevent impromptu strategies and a sudden, unexpected financial burden on the community. Should sustainability plans include plans for community financial input this needs to be clearly

and correctly communicated. Transparency in policy making is of utmost importance when dealing with financial situations in poorer communities – money is a sensitive topic.

The abovementioned discrepancies show similarities to those noted by Hasselgård and Straume (2014) in Zimbabwean communities. The authors demonstrate how official discourse is given contextual meaning by the recipient organisations, who thereby work within the discourse to maintain a relationship between the project policy and practice, yet modify the discourse to fit with local needs, often out of necessity for reasons such as safety. It is in cases such as these where the recommendations of Hasselgård and Straume, that ‘further research should ... explore the relationship between hegemonic discourses of SDP and practice’, should be applied in order to find the much needed balance between researchers in the Global North and actors in the Global South (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). As highlighted by Hartmann and Kwauk (2011), discrepancies between discourse and practice run the risk of being counterproductive in the bigger picture. We argue that such discrepancies may be reduced through active communication and utilisation of local knowledge from planning through execution of SDP initiatives. Furthermore, we would like to emphasise the importance of critical pedagogy in the planning of SDP initiatives, most especially in determining the pedagogic strategy to be utilised. Darnell and Hayhurst (2012) highlight the importance of complementary use of critical theory and actor-oriented investigation in the study of SDP. Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) indicate very eloquently how the critical theory of Paulo Freire may be used in the study of SDP and in the next section we will discuss how this may apply in our investigation.

In a Freirean understanding, as reported by Spaaij and Jeanes (2012), the traditional didactic pedagogy commonly used in SDP fails to take in lived experiences and local knowledge of learners as a starting point. Traditional didactic pedagogy involves volunteers from the Global North imparting their knowledge to marginalised communities in the Global South (Spaaij & Jeanes, 2012). Our analysis of policy documents revealed a traditional didactic pedagogy as the original approach for programme strategy at the MCSC, though in practice this is only partly the case in reality. At the MCSC local employment is combined with the use of volunteers, a combination which might limit misunderstanding between Northern policy and local knowledge of wider cultural and political context. Communication between the local staff at the MCSC and foreign volunteers allows for strategies to be discussed that are in line with donor

policy, yet are undertaken in ways best suited to the local environment. Without taking into account the unique cultural identity and local experience of target groups the use of sport in development may serve to reproduce the existing status quo and re-enact existing power relations. This, in turn, supports reprogramming youths' identities through socialisation into a predetermined world and enforces neo-colonialism in the name of education and development (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011).

Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) further question peer education as an effective pedagogical vehicle for social change, asking whether the young participants find their peers a more credible and approachable source of information. The authors illustrate how young people experienced that their own knowledge and awareness developed with peer education programmes, though they had problems transforming their situations due to wider social and political discourses where their voices were limited. The present study found a positive experience with peer education. The participants involved in the development programmes highlighted the value of being able to debate and discuss issues in their own community relating to, for instance, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS awareness. In contrast to Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) the participants in our programmes rated the knowledge they got from their peers as more real, and noted that it was easier to understand than when presented at school. This is in agreement with Coalter (2013), whose arguments for peer education include the benefits of peers being embedded in communities, where their status as equals encourages belief in their understanding of experiences, and long-term continued social contact encourages the building of trusting relationships. Furthermore, peer-led programmes benefit peer leaders, perhaps even more so than participants, through increased self-efficacy and self-esteem gained through training programmes, decision making and gaining a feeling of control. Such was the case at the MCSC, where peer leaders involved in programmes reported increased confidence and social status. However, Coalter additionally cautions against the 'ideologically and symbolically central' view of peer leaders in the SDP literature. Appointing appropriate peer leaders is essential to the functioning of a peer-led programme, yet such a task is difficult when taking into account the social heterogeneity of adolescents. Furthermore, the ideology behind peer education may be flawed in cases where adolescent peer leaders are used to convey adult messages to young people, as well as when peer leaders themselves share the same views the intervention is attempting to change.

A third pedagogical tradition illustrated by Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) is relationship-building. We can draw parallels between Spaaij and Jeanes's relationship-building and Coalter's (2013) 'targeted' recruitment, where some form of relationship strategy is adopted to engage and educate young people through sport. In SDP there is often more of a coaching relationship between programme staff and participants than a traditional teacher-to-student relationship. In our findings the participants highlight the importance of good staff relationships, with one participant stating that one of the reasons that a previous programme had failed was due to lack of good staff relationships. The same problem is identified by a staff member when he talked about the problems with the staff in another programme. Furthermore, boys involved in a third programme highlight the importance of one of the staff members as a good facilitator they can trust. Focusing on mutual trust, respect, dialogue and non-authoritarian approaches clearly resonates with the elements in Freire's critical pedagogy as related to SDP by Spaaij and Jeanes. However, while Coalter (2013) argues that the development of relationships forms a basis for behavioural change and promotes individual self-worth and ambition among participants (p. 150), Spaaij and Jeanes caution against the use of the relationship-building concept to favour empowerment at the individual level over more collective forms of learning and acting – especially when curricula have been designed in the Global North with little local input.

## **Conclusion**

Kay (2009) warns against the overly narrow concentration often associated with rigorous research methods, which may dismiss the complex process through which individuals experience any beneficial outcomes from sport. To base research in sport and development solely on an implicitly western model will risk dismissing local voice and experience. That is not to say, however, that qualitative design alone can nullify global power relations and neo-colonialist positivism, yet reflexive forms of research, most especially in a monitoring and evaluation context, may allow for an increased understanding of both the 'hard facts' and the local experience as outcomes of sport for development programmes (Kay, 2009, 2012; Spaaij, 2011).



Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) suggest a preliminary phase for SDP initiatives, in which educators spend time in the recipient community in order to research the local knowledge, social situations and needs of the target groups. Such an undertaking would discourage the current tendency toward top-down planning of curricula, while encouraging collaboration and co-creation of knowledge between donors in the Global North and recipients in the Global South. Even better than a preliminary research phase undertaken by Global North educators would be the employment of local educators who already know and understand the needs of the community. This study has demonstrated how local employment in the MCSC created trust within the community, as well as bringing in inherent knowledge of which strategies would and would not work. However, at the same time it must be emphasised that the specific findings represented here are contextual and represent participant experience only found in this particular SDP community. The contexts where SDP programs are delivered, as well as their intended beneficiaries, may differ in infinitely different and unknown ways.

The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Lindsey and Grattan, Hasselgård and Straume, Kay and Darnell and Hayhurst. This study may not contribute towards 'hard evidence' in SDP research, yet we do indicate how the inclusion of local voices and local employment in SDP initiatives, from planning through execution, may be beneficial for both donors and recipients, as underlined by Jeanes and Magee (2014):

*Only through prioritising the voices of participants within research and policy development can we begin to understand the nuances of experience and understand what sport-for-development does (and does not do) within local communities (p.152)*

Having local voices involved in the planning process may contribute to donors' understanding what is needed and what strategies will work in the recipient community, thereby increasing chances of success. From the recipient point of view, the initiatives intended to benefit the community may be designed to address the community's specific needs, while employment in the community benefits the community economically. Furthermore, including local voices in dialogue surrounding the SDP initiative, and more specifically the curriculum to be employed, may contribute to creating a relationship between equals, as opposed to the often seen, neo-colonial, donor-recipient relationship.

Through starting such initiatives with an equal relationship we may begin to work towards the co-creation of knowledge and a stronger base for emancipation of the oppressed.

A future direction for SDP research would need to address the complex reality of social issues because local perspectives and knowledge can no longer be denied. Cultural-constructed studies provide insights from local knowledge in the interpretation of evidence and understanding of the SDP field. Context-sensitive methodologies, such as ethnological work or Participatory Action Research, preferably over longer time frames than that adopted here, may add to the pool of knowledge. This may then contribute towards allowing research to generate a holistic and contextual understanding of SDP processes and effects.

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## **Appendix 1: Conceptualising the local experience in sport and development: Local perspectives from a South African community**

The following paper is supplementary to the research article "*Conceptualising the local experience in sport and development: Local perspectives from a South African community*". In the research article one particular Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) intervention in a South African community is examined in an attempt to understand how a SDP programme is experienced from the perspective of local community members. Several scholars in the SDP-field identify both the lack of and the importance of studies on local actors and underlying processes in SDP initiatives (Hasselgård & Straume, 2014; Jeanes & Magee, 2014; Kay, 2012; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012), and in this complementary work I will elaborate a little bit more around this issue.

The first section of this supplementary paper goes deeper into the theory utilised in the research article. The theoretical framework employs primary SDP literature related to actor-oriented sociology combined with critical SDP literature for examining how SDP interventions are executed and utilised in recipient communities. In this section broader explanations of three key themes in the sport for development sector are presented. Firstly, an introduction to the SDP field is given and the knowledge production debate in sport and development is outlined, followed by a look into the perspective of actors in SDP initiatives. Thirdly, critical theory is presented in relation to the study of SDP.

In the second section of this supplementary paper the methodology will be presented, following which the methods section in the article will be elaborated on. In this section I will elaborate more on person-centred ethnography, the insider/outsider perspective to research, research design, data selection and gathering, data analysis and ethical considerations in relation to the article.

## Theoretical framework

### *Introduction to the SDP field*

During the last decade the use of sport for social change has been given considerable attention both by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and in academia. In this growing field the rhetoric has shifted from 'sports aid' through 'sports development aid', 'development through sport' and 'sport for development' towards the more encompassing term that will be used here: Sport for Development and Peace (Straume & Hasselgård, 2013). A substantial contribution towards this increased attention stems from the United Nations (UN). Through their millennium goals and stating of 2005 as "the International Year of Sport and Physical Education", the expectation that sport could serve as a contributor to human development and social change was trusted, even expected, to work in a range of areas such as education, health, gender issues, disability and peace:

*"The world of sport presents a natural partnership for the United Nations system. By its very nature sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and citizenship. Sport brings individuals and communities together, highlights commonalities and bridging cultural or ethnic divides [...] When these positive aspects of sport are emphasized, sport becomes a powerful vehicle through which the United Nations can work towards achieving its goals."* (United Nations, 2005, In: Levermore & Beacom, 2009).

A central debate in the SDP field is how sport can contribute in achieving the goals put forward by the UN, and several studies illustrate that while sport itself cannot cure all social ills, it can, through carefully designed programmes, be a powerful, practical and cost-effective tool in achieving specific development goals (Black, 2009; Coalter, 2010; Kay, 2012). However, according to Kay (2009), SDP scholars are uncertain about both the potential social impacts of sports as well as the ability of research to identify them. This uncertainty has been central in the SDP field in the last decade. A frequent call from policy makers, the UN and donors for a more "evidenced based" SDP field has led to a knowledge production debate regarding what works or what does not work in SDP (Coalter, 2013).

With a call for a stronger evidence base comes also a call for more monitoring and evaluation in SDP (Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014). The two processes of impact and outcomes of programmes as a means of evidence gathering are deemed important for knowledge regarding why programmes have or have not achieved the desired results. Scholars such as Coalter (2013) and Langer (2015) call for rigorous evaluations of SDP interventions to fill what they define as an evidence gap in order to legitimise SDP. These authors claim that if SDP initiatives remain vague about how sport leads to development, at the same time as the programmes have difficulties proving their effectiveness, the field cannot positively influence development outcomes.

On the other hand literature offered by scholars such as Kay (2009), Nicholls et al. (2011), Kay (2012), Adams and Harris (2014) and Jeanes and Lindsey (2014) indicates the problems associated with certain aspects of having a strong focus on monitoring and evaluation. Jeanes and Lindsey (2014) demonstrate that evidence produced in SDP is often difficult to access when programme evaluations are not regularly made public, and academic research is often published in formats that are inaccessible to practitioners. Furthermore, the content of the existing reviews tends to focus on impacts and outcome achievements whilst overlooking underlying processes. Kay (2012) and Adams and Harris (2014) demonstrate that power relations are affected by the processes around monitoring and evaluation when the procedures are shaped by funder information requirements, thereby limiting local programme learning, compromising data quality and imposing burdensome forms of data collection and reporting that undermine relationships. Additionally, the donor-recipient relationship can be viewed as hierarchical.

Kay (2012) advocates for monitoring and evaluation to be refocused on internal programme learning needs rather than external funders determined quest for “evidence”. Such refocused monitoring and evaluation emphasis is supported by several SDP scholars such as Jeanes and Lindsey (2014), Young and Okada (2014), Hasselgård and Straume (2014), Lindsey and Grattan (2012) and Darnell and Hayhurst (2012). These authors advocate for an approach that incorporates local knowledge in order to collect data directly, and to observe and reflexively consider the choices and accounts of participants, allowing them to speak in their own terms. With a person-centred ethnography, this article



belongs in this perspective and contributes towards the evidence debate with knowledge on underlying processes from the perspectives of participants and actors in the SDP field.

### ***The perspective of actors***

Despite the steady expansion of literature in the SDP field over the last decade, it can be argued that there is a gap in knowledge that examines the experiences of those at the receiving end of SDP initiatives (Hayhurst, 2009; Jeanes & Magee, 2014). Jeanes and Magee (2014) highlight the importance of research which takes local experience into account:

*Only through prioritising the voices of participants within research and policy development can we begin to understand the nuances of experience and understand what sport-for-development does (and does not do) within local communities (p. 152)*

In Hasselgård and Straume (2014) the authors demonstrate the importance of future studies with an actor-oriented perspective. More studies with an ethnographic and actor-oriented approach may contribute to a better understanding of the donor-recipient relationship in the growing SDP sector. How does SDP work in practice and how are projects adapted within local realities? How is success and failure seen from the perspectives of implementers in the local communities? A better understanding of questions such as these can help with unveiling the multiple realities that determine how SDP programmes are experienced by different actors, as well as how the conflicting interests and intentions of different parties affect the way in which SDP projects are implemented. Several authors have directly taken the perspective of participants in relation to SDP and initiative practice (Fokwang, 2009; Guest, 2009; Jeanes & Magee, 2014; Kay, 2009; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; J. Njelesani et al., 2014; Schulenkorf et al., 2013; Spaaij, 2011). However, in contrast to the large body of literature focused on the SDP field this is still a limited number.

Guest (2009) uses the case of the Olympic Movement's grassroots outreach to Africa and analyses ethnographic examples from field work in Angola. One of his findings is a mismatch in local understanding of sport in relation to modern SDP efforts. From a local perspective sport was seen as a form of amusement or recreation, and locals felt that involvement in organising sport activities should be paid work - not volunteer work as often assumed by organisations. Modern SDP initiatives generally take a different stance, wherein sport often has a "life skills" function and participation in sport activities is believed to have effects such as increased self-esteem or confidence. These findings illustrate several examples of disconnection between what sport initiatives are seeking to develop amongst young people and what is actually cultural relevant, meaning and useful. Guest (2009) further argues that a growing number of SDP studies disregard local experiences and focus on impact and outcome effectiveness in a global perspective. The studies Guest is referring to are not unimportant, but according to Guest it would be more beneficial in conjunction with increased knowledge about the diversity of actual experiences of individuals and communities on the receiving end of SDP programmes.

In agreement with Guest (2009), Nicholls et al. (2011) advocate for local understanding of the concept of sport as a development tool. Nicholls et al. (2011) conduct an empirical study where seventeen semi-structured interviews with leaders and trainers in the Kicking AIDS out network were undertaken. The findings in the study illustrate barriers to the co-creation of knowledge through top-down driven approaches, where the trainers on the ground report great distance between themselves and the policy making process. The authors argue that a lack of evidence, together with the call for a more "evidence based" SDP field, has dominated the knowledge production over the practitioners' knowledge and the co-creation of knowledge. The perspective of actors is also represented in Lindsey and Grattan (2012) the authors argue that the growing academic literature primarily deals with the SDP field as an international practice that is undertaken in the Global South but supported by, and predominantly driven from, the Global North. The authors thus illustrate a significant need for research that seeks to understand SDP from the perspective of actors in the Global South with a decentred actor-orientated approach. The findings in their study show that SDP initiatives in these two communities were shaped, and potentially challenged, both by local and global conditions. Their findings and conclusions are in disagreement with a great deal of the rest of the literature, in which many argue that the Global South has little influence on local SDP programmes.

The article at hand examines participant's experiences with SDP initiatives with regard to the sport for all perspective, girl's sport and community views on outcome and impact of SDP. From the limited studies that have been done on actors in the SDP literature some of the key findings indicate that football or soccer is the dominant sport selected in many SDP initiatives, especially in Southern Africa. This is often explained using football's extended popularity and how it creates interest in the communities where it is carried out (Guest, 2009; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; J. Njelesani et al., 2014; Schulenkorf et al., 2013). However, this focus on football has been demonstrated to neglect, in particular, girls, due to the often dominant masculine views that follow football culturally (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; J. Njelesani et al., 2014). From a community perspective, participants illustrate that one of the most important aspects with SDP programming is that they keep children away from the streets. This means that when the children are busy with sport they are also not involved in other activities that could potentially be dangerous, such as involvement in crime, alcohol or drug abuse or gang involvement (Guest, 2009; Kay, 2009; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; J. Njelesani et al., 2014).

In Nicholls et al. (2011) and Lindsey and Grattan (2012) participatory action research (PAR) or decolonising is offered as an alternative approach with regard to promoting local knowledge as more expressive evidence in SDP, that stands against the rigorous evaluations often represented by qualitative outcome and impact measures. The idea of rigorous impact evaluations or 'positivism' is viewed as having neo-colonial or hegemonic motives that creates a renewed oppression of marginalised groups. In Langer (2015) the perspective of actors and the focus on power relations employed in Nicholls et al. (2011) and Lindsey and Grattan (2012) is seen as potentially detrimental. He goes on to argue for a more evidence-based practice, indicating that without evidence on impacts and outcomes of SDP interventions, a risk is run of causing more harm than good when investing resources into a social intervention: 'it is ethically questionable to implement development interventions with incomplete knowledge of their effect on poor people's lives'(p. 70).

Coalter (2013) claims that this heated evidence discussion and rhetoric about positivism and neo-colonialism is little more than an age-old debate about quantitative and qualitative research. Reflecting on the rhetoric the article at hand recognises contributions from both sides, and sees them as complementary. However, '*Conceptualising the local*

*experience in sport and development: Local perspectives in a South African community'* is a qualitative study that focuses on participants and their experiences with SDP interventions, that has clear similarities with previously reported perspectives of actors. Kay (2009) illustrates that qualitative approaches may help to capture rich descriptions and incorporate an individual's point of view of the complex process on how individuals experience the social outcomes of sport related to SDP interventions. In a SDP context the particular value of securing accounts of this type can provide a mechanism for addressing the complex social phenomena that go beyond sport programmes. This means that it is important that positivist methods that deliver 'hard evidence', often recognised by policy makers connected to policy and effectiveness, are treated with caution. Efforts to understand the social impact of sport are unnecessarily limited if we study human behaviour only as a product of policy implementation.

The perspective of actors forms the main background for understanding the participant experience in relation to SDP in '*Conceptualising the local experience in sport and development: Local perspectives from a South African community*'. The use of critical pedagogic theory in SDP provides a means of analysis of the way in which SDP initiatives are carried out from the donor side. A critical analysis of the methods used to impart knowledge and/or skills from the Global North to recipients in the Global South allows for a closer relationship between aims and outcomes and is relevant for SDP programme delivery.

### ***Critical pedagogy in SDP***

Darnell and Hayhurst (2012) identify a critical junction in the SDP literature in their suggestion that actor-oriented research be complementary to a more critical analysis of SDP. The authors indicate how the use of critical theory, in their case Gramscian hegemony and postcolonial theory, in conjunction with an actor-oriented sociology may bring about a marriage between "top-down" and "bottom-up" research. Darnell and Hayhurst (2012) stating that contributions such as the actor-oriented perspective done by Lindsey and Grattan (2012) make an important and timely contribution to the SPD field. The article stands out as one of the few recent works which manages to integrate

perspectives from the broader development studies literature into the study of sport, identifying and highlighting key issues of agency, power and politics together with the importance of a socio-political context when they look into two local Zambian communities and speak from the perspective of actors. However, the authors go on to argue that while the findings of Lindsey and Grattan (2012) stand out as a strong example of development ethnography, their work should best be understood as complementary, not oppositional, to the critical analyses of "northern led" or "top-down" development in SDP programmes. Employing perspectives from hegemony and postcolonial theory, Darnell and Hayhurst (2012) argue for improved commitment to the issues of global power structures and sports ability to meet international development goals.

Darnell and Hayhurst (2012) further illustrate that the absence of a critical framework in Lindsey and Grattan (2012) could be problematic for the local knowledge production and the effectiveness of SDP. The authors point out how such a gap in theoretical framework may work towards obscuring power relations that affect inequality on a global scale. Darnell and Hayhurst (2012) suggest how Gramscian hegemony and postcolonial theory may be used as a framework through which to analyse the mobilisation, conceptualisation and effects of neoliberalism in SDP, and thereby address development inequalities. They furthermore highlight the importance of pairing postcolonial and hegemonic theories in conjunction with decentred, actor-oriented research in order to consider the perspectives of all stakeholders, though they also acknowledge that Gramscian hegemony and postcolonial theory are not the only critical lenses through which to analyse SDP.

Darnell (2012) argues for a new praxis in SDP in such a way as to challenge the conditions of global inequality. Starting with understanding power relations from a global perspective, Darnell's proposed critical praxis aims to challenge global hierarchies through attending to the cause of both inter- and trans-national inequalities, as opposed to merely treating the symptoms – as is the current trend in SDP praxis. In order to accomplish this, research and practice in SDP should aim to challenge oppression. To this end, sustaining a critical engagement, conceptualised through a lens of critical pedagogy, with the politics and policies of SDP is important for two main reasons. Firstly, SDP informed by critical pedagogy provides a unique means by which to engage in critical conversations about international development and its many inequalities. Critical pedagogy provides a means for challenging subjugated knowledge and socio-political

hierarchies found in SDP. Secondly, critical pedagogy in SDP may provide a means for a rethinking of the hegemonic ideas that are currently commonplace in SDP.

In the SDP field a limited number of studies have examined pedagogical approaches employed in SDP initiatives, and the assumption that ‘sport works’ in SDP initiatives may have restricted critical discussions of how it works in relation to the educational effects that we regularly attribute to sport in SDP initiatives (Coalter, 2013). Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) article: *Education for social change? A Freirean critique of sport for development and peace* is one of the few articles that analyses the pedagogies involved in SDP initiatives. The authors indicate key concepts of the work of Paulo Freire with relevance to SDP. In agreement with Darnell (2012), Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) indicate how critical pedagogy can offer a theoretical framework that challenges the status quo and contests oppression in marginalised groups, giving them the opportunity to enhance their agency. They outline the key themes associated with Freirean pedagogy and highlight three principles for the use of Freirean critical pedagogy in SDP. The first is to build the curriculum around the participants’ situations, where the participants highlight their own needs and set goals for the programmes with the staff. The second is to move away from traditional didactic methods imposed during colonisation towards more effective methods that increase awareness and develop a sense of agency. Third is the importance of education being directive without being controlling, in which the educator assumes authority, but does not transform this into authoritarianism, thus moving towards a pedagogy for emancipation.

As mentioned in the introduction, SDP is assumed to have positive social benefits in a variety of areas, frequently associated with some form of education or empowerment outcome, especially in health promotion or in areas often referred to as core ‘life skills’ in SDP terms. The pedagogical approaches used in delivering these broad areas often have a wide span, nonetheless Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) identify three broad pedagogical approaches in SDP initiatives: the traditional didactic pedagogies, peer education and relationship building. The first stems from the traditional use of volunteers from the Global North to impart their knowledge to marginalised young people in Global South. Darnell (2007) criticises this approach as being neo-colonial in that SDP policy is determined by Global North organisations and their curriculum translated by volunteers with good sport development knowledge, but often less experience with youth and

international development work. When volunteers with limited knowledge about wider cultural and political context combined with limited understanding of local issues affecting the targeted community are brought in and become ‘educators’, the local knowledge and lived experience of participants gets undervalued. The second pedagogical tradition in SDP identified is ‘peer education’, which is based on the assumption that young people will learn when given the opportunity to interact, debate and discuss the information and knowledge presented to them (Spaaij & Jeanes, 2012). The third model identified, the relationship-building model, is based on developing connections between programme staff and participants which are rooted in a mutual understanding and respect for the cultural context of the participants. The peer education and relationship-building approaches both provide a framework through which a Freirean pedagogy could potentially be delivered.

In the article at hand critical pedagogy with ideas from Spaaij and Jeanes (2012) are utilised in relation to understanding the local experiences of SDP initiatives, and its relevance to SDP programs. Inspired by the aforementioned debate in SDP literature I investigated the local experience of community members affected by, though not necessarily involved in, SDP interventions.

## Methodology

### *Person-centred ethnography*

The research agenda in examining the perspective of actors and exploring the participant experience of SDP interventions originates from when I first experienced the SDP field as a sport volunteer in South Africa in 2010. Since returning and beginning my studies in sport and development, much of the literature I have encountered does not represent the experience I had as a practitioner in the field. I am not the first to have found the practice/theory dichotomy challenging, and with growing experience as a researcher I am beginning to understand the value of, and need for, critical work. Having found the SDP literature to be lacking in perspectives from the ground, I wanted to find a way of investigating a more local perspective to get some local knowledge into the SDP field.

With this background and intention as a starting point, a person-centred ethnographical approach was employed. LeVine (1982) used the term *person-centred ethnography* in relation to anthropology to develop experience-near ways of describing human behaviour: “Person-centred ethnography, taking the individual perspective on culture and experience rather than that of a collective system or external observer” (p. 233). Furthermore, LeVine (1982) contrasts standard and person-centred ethnographies by describing the former as analogous to a map of a community or an aerial photograph, while the latter provides a more intimate idea of what life is like within the community. Person-centred ethnography has primary focus on the individual and how an individual’s experience is shaped by social and cultural processes, which allows for an investigation into the complex interrelationships between individuals and their social, material and symbolic context. The studies are often conducted using a combination of methods for data collection, and the combination of observation and interviews are well established in these types of studies (Hollan, 1997). Levy and Hollan (2015) give a detailed description of how to perform person-centred interviewing and observation. It is, however, important to emphasise that there are no definite rules or recipes for how to conduct person-centred ethnography, but the guidelines offered in the literature were particularly helpful in getting the field work started.



The methodology used in person-centred ethnography has roots in medical and psychological traditions that are interesting, but do not have a direct relevance to this study. However, Hollan (2001) points out that the methodology has a broad scope and can be useful in all fields of social science as it provides a means of basing anthropological theory in the personal experience of living people. Stevens et al. (2008) provide an example of this through their use of person-centred ethnography in the field of engineering education. From a SDP point of view this allows for enhancing the understanding of development policy and discourse in the context of the point of view of the individuals for whom SDP programmes are designed to benefit.

In relation to philosophy of science this project draws on the social construction of reality, where people are believed to construct their own knowledge through encounters with other people. In a world that is undeniably material and bound up in physical and biological mechanisms, it is also fundamentally social. Engagement with other people is built up by relations and practices constituted in social roles that we assume in everyday life. In the tradition of anthropology and ethnography this tradition deals with “thick descriptions of human behaviour” (Schnegg, 2015).

### ***Position and preconception in the field***

The qualitative research methods used here are based on the fact that both myself, as the researcher, and the participants in the study are affecting the research process (Thagaard, 2009). Therefore I will, in this section, reflect on my own position with regard to the field of study. Firstly, as the researcher it is important to clarify how my preconception influences the research process. Preconception in this context is the researcher’s own experience and knowledge about the field of study. My first experience with the SDP field was in the spring semester of 2010, through participation in the study *Sport, Culture and Development Corporation* at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH). The education from NIH offered an introduction to the more theoretical aspect of the field that was a valuable supplement to the practical component. The practical component entailed working as a sport volunteer in *Madala Town* and operating from the *Madala Town Community Sport Centre* in a South African non-governmental organisation (NGO) for a

year beginning in June 2010. Having experience from the SDP field as a practitioner combined with the introduction to theoretical perspectives from NIH ignited my curiosity and inspiration to go further into the SDP field. The research for the study took place in the same community as the above mention practical component. The practical SDP experience from working as a sport volunteer in the same community as the research took place will be further discussed in relation to methodological selections under preconceptions and research position. Since returning to Norway in 2011, I have further studied *Practical Pedagogics and Physical Education (PPU)* followed by the current master degree in *Sport Science* under the department of *Physical Education and Pedagogics*. This background and associated expectations are examples of ‘baggage’ that Thagaard (2009) illustrates researchers take with them into the research processes. I will, in the next section, argue for how this pre-understanding and experience have both positive and undesirable implications for the research process.

### ***Part-insider/part outsider***

In Dwyer and Buckle (2009) and Asselin (2003) the authors illustrate a distinction between insider and outsider research regarding the position of the researcher in the field of study. Insider research can be described as a situation where the researcher has a direct relation to the research setting, such as a shared identity, the same language or previous shared experiences or cultural belonging. Positive aspects for the researcher with an insider perspective can be easy access to informants and more complete acceptance with the research participants. Furthermore an understanding of the social norms and cultural behaviour in the field study allows the researcher to potentially gain greater understanding into the data gathered (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). However, the insider perspective can be problematic. Asselin (2003) illustrates that the researcher may find the relationship between the researcher and the participant blurring, (role duality) which can make it difficult to separate their preconception and knowledge from the information presented by the research participants. This role-duality is more likely to occur when the researcher has a clear insider perspective and is familiar with the research setting, and can result in interference with the validity of the research process. While insider research has been criticised for its lack of objectivity, outsider research may typically secure a high degree

of objectivity. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) define outsider research as a process where the researcher has neither a direct nor indirect connection to the participants in the research project. The objection against the outsider perspective is that the researcher does not share a membership with the group, community or culture being studied and may struggle to understand how the structures in the field of study “really work”.

The above discussion is relevant to my position in the SDP field as a researcher with regard to the local perspective in the SDP community and my experience with the community as a sport volunteer. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) use the term “the space between” to describe the combination of the insider/outsider dichotomy in research, meaning that a researcher in an insider position can at the same time understand the research process from an outsider position. By proposing a dialectical relationship, where the researcher can belong in both positions, the focus is more on the dynamic aspects of the researcher position in relation to the research context, and illustrating that the researcher in obtaining both positions can reduce the risk of bias. In Hollan (2001), person-centred ethnography is presented as an alternative to the researcher who is not already an authentic member of the field being studied, and seeks insights into the conditions and perspectives of specific groups of people. As a former sport volunteer in the MCSC I have inside experience and knowledge in relation to the group and community in which the study took place, but am not an existing member of this community. My preconception regarding the sport environment and the SDP field in Madala Town combined with close key relations in the field, made it easier to gain a membership role in the community. However, as mentioned by Asselin (2003), the researcher has to be careful with assumptions about culture and belonging. Taking for granted that one understands the social norms and behaviour in one’s surroundings may limit the researcher’s perspective, and important data may be overlooked. An example from the field work of my part insider/part outsider position was experienced when informants frequently started to answer my questions with phrases such as “you know how it is here ...” or “you know us and how it was”. In these situations as a presumed insider I had to be alert and aware, and even though I might have had an understanding of what they meant, it was necessary to take a step back and ask for clarification and elaboration as an outsider.

I argue that my part-insider/part outsider gives strength to the study at hand. Throughout the entire process from preparation for the field work, through conducting and analysing the data, I have evaluated my position in relation to the insider/outsider role to find my place in field. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) point out that researchers need to be conscious about the strengths and weaknesses in their preconceptions so they may use their theoretical knowledge and experience to their advantage in order to understand the complex situations arising during the research process. Throughout the research process, choices are made with the aim of understanding the SDP field and the local participant experience within SDP initiatives. However, the majority of the collected empirical data presented in the article stems from data collected in the person-centred ethnographical field work and not from my own experience. Furthermore, other aspects of my position as an insider and “member” will be further discussed in reflections of the field work and in ethical considerations.

### ***Field work and research design***

To answer the research question at hand a qualitative perspective was employed. Qualitative methods such as observations, interviews, text and video analysis have gradually been more accepted and utilised in social science research. Recognised for its dynamic and flexible nature, qualitative research allows for the methods to be adjusted if needed during the research process (Bryman, 2008). In order to investigate the participants’ experience with SDP, field work combining the qualitative methods of document analysis, observations and interviews based on key elements from person-centred ethnographical methodology was undertaken. The ethnographic approach describes what people do and say in a context that is not structured by the researcher, and detailed descriptions of people’s reality offer the researcher an opportunity to understand the less apparent aspects of the field in question (Bryman, 2008). All interviews were conducted in English without an interpreter as the informants spoke English fluently. Data collection was conducted in a particular community in South Africa for six weeks between October and December 2014. In a person-centred context six weeks of field work is regarded as little. Levy and Hollan (2015) illustrate a norm where person-centred ethnography follows its subject over years, especially in the physiology tradition. This

was, however, not possible due to the scope of this as a master thesis, and thereby certain adaptations had to be made and will be described in later stages of this paper.

### ***Pre-field work and selection***

In qualitative studies the researcher bases their selection of participants on *strategic selection*. This implies that the researcher has to find the informants that can give information which may help with examining the research question. A researcher in the qualitative perspective may find it difficult to get informants depending on several factors, including the research question, how big the population that can give relevant information is or there may be cultural barriers that make the informants reluctant to participate (Thagaard, 2009). The interviewees used in my analysis were young adults (18-26 years), whom I further categorised into SDP participants and non-SDP participants. The SDP-participants had been a part of SDP initiatives at the MCSC either currently or recently, and the non-SDP participants had no connection to the MCSC. From my preconceptions I had knowledge and access to the MCSC to observe and interact with the current SDP-participants. The Non SDP participants needed to have a connection to sport, but not be involved in the SDP activities. Foremost, these informants were chosen for recruitment through observing both organised and unorganised sport activities in the community. Both recruitment strategies can be described as *snowball sampling*, where the researcher first contacts people that fit into the strategic selection and builds relations from recommended contacts that can offer relevant information Thagaard (2009).

### ***Document analysis***

Analyses from text are frequently conducted as a supplement to observation and interviews, and have long traditions in qualitative research. Documents for document analysis can be any kind of written text, such as private letters, public documents, newspapers and policy documents. Public documents are accessible for everyone, but enclosed documents demand special access (Thagaard, 2009). The document analysis in this study was not a large part of the data collection. In the beginning stages of the field

work, websites and social media were analysed to map the SDP field in the community and for changes that had occurred since I worked there as a sport volunteer. It was, however, important to analyse what kind of SDP areas the MCSC focused on in their daily operations. This was done by analysing publicly accessible documents relating to the policy documents and daily operations in the MCSC.

### ***Observations***

Participant observation and field work are often used as synonyms in the literature, and both refer to the researcher's position as an observer (Thagaard, 2009). In Thagaard (2009) the researcher role as observer and the degree of participation are defined as *field roles*. Shall the researcher be a part of the situations at hand and actively engage with the participants or passively observe from the outside? In *participant observations* the researcher actively takes part in the activities with the participants, to make contact, experience their surroundings and talk with them to get information in relation to the research. *Non-participating observations* may be preferred if the participation of the researcher may in some way harm or affect the situation at hand. In field studies the researcher often moves between these roles, depending on the purpose of the study and the situations the researcher encounters during the field work (Thagaard, 2009).

The objective for my field work was to get detailed perspectives of SDP initiatives in this particular community. During observations of sport activities not connected to the MCSC I often assumed the field role as participant observer, and I often joined in with young adults playing unstructured sports on the sports field. Sport has no language, which makes it easy to create a relationship, and I often remained to talk with them after play had ended. As mentioned, my previous position in the community as a former sport volunteer affected my field role. Because of this I assumed a non-participation observer role in activities related to SDP and the MCSC. To assume this field role was natural since the purpose of the research was not to do an evaluation of the SDP initiatives at the MCSC, but to understand the SDP participant perspective. It was also essential to create an understanding from my participants that I was not a part of the MCSC, and that they could talk to me about their personal experiences with SDP without this information getting

back to the centre. However, despite my efforts towards creating distance from the centre, and assuming a non-participant role, my experience in returning to the community has been that I will perhaps always be associated with my previous role with the MCSC. As the only white man in a population of 50 000 black South Africans it can be challenging to keep a low profile and not draw attention to oneself. Fangen (2004) identifies many challenges associated with the various roles of field work, such as the example above illustrates with ethnicity, nationality and blurring roles. On one hand this role-blurring may result in interesting data and new insight, but on the other hand the researcher must reflect upon the potential that blurring roles can result in negative reactions for the perception of the researcher.

In field studies, participant observations are often conducted in combination with interviews. The interview and observation situation must both be understood from a social construction standpoint, meaning that the results presented in the article originate from social interactions between researcher and interviewer. From person-centred ethnography, this combination of methods is seen as valuable for the transformation of behaviour in different settings. “Whenever possible, person-centred interviews should be conducted alongside more general ethnographic observation since the two forms of data are mutually informative and telling” (Levy and Hollan, 2015, p. 338). Levy and Hollan (2015) further elaborate on the advantage the researcher has with this combination when it gives the opportunity to interact with and observe the respondents in a different setting, and to compare what they say in interviews with what they do in a different setting. At the same time it also gives the researcher the advantage to analyse the data from observations in relation to the interviews. As mentioned, this combination was employed in my field work. However, due to the scope of the project only data from the observations could be brought into the interview situation and not *vice versa*.

### ***Interviews***

In total six interviews of individuals and one group interview were conducted in the later stages of the field work. As mentioned above the informants were selected based on their experience with SDP. Three of the informants had previously been or were currently

involved with SDP projects, while two informants were involved in sport activities outside the MCSC, but had not had experience with SDP interventions. One interview was conducted with a central staff member working in the SDP organisation. In addition to the six individual interviews a group interview was conducted with three girls and had a primary focus on girl sport in the community. The informants were all identified during the observation period through both snowball and purposive sampling. The informants ranged from 18 to 21 years of age, excluding the staff member who was 40 years old.

Thagaard (2009) points out that research interviews can be conducted in different ways in relation to structure. On one side an open structure is informal, with open questions, which has the advantage that the researcher can follow up the information he/she gets in the process and seek for deeper understanding. On the other side are interviews with a heavy structure, in which research questions are made beforehand. This gives the advantage of comparing the answers from the informants since they get the same questions. However, the most common interview technique in qualitative studies is semi-structured interviews. Here the topics for the interviews are primarily set up beforehand, but the order they come in is often decided during the interview (Thagaard, 2009). In the field work at hand, semi-structured interviews were conducted. As the researcher I wanted to cover a range of topics with all my informants for deeper understanding in relation to the research question, and at the same have a structure where unheard stories or other topics could come up.

The interview structure followed descriptions related to person-centred ethnography. Hollan (2001) argues that person-centred ethnography must start with close observation of ongoing behaviour in different social contexts, and eventually end with some form of more active engagement where the informants reflect upon themselves and their experiences. In agreement with Hollan (2001) I would like to emphasise that the data from the interviews are not more valued than data from observations, but are complementary.

Levy and Hollan (2015) illustrate that a good start to a person-centred interview begins with an open structure. Furthermore, they illustrate how the interviewee moves between the interview roles identified as *informant* and *respondent*. In the informant role the interviewee answers structured questions such as “please describe the SDP work done in



your community”. In the role as a respondent the interviewee responds to a probe for a deeper understanding related to a more structured question. Such a probe may be in the form of “please elaborate”, “explain how this affected you personally” or even an encouraging nod from the researcher. To make this flow in the interview situation Levy and Hollan (2015) suggest a combination of informant and respondent- directed questions and probes. These probes and questions can be relatively open or closed, and it is up to the researcher to understand how to utilise them. An open question or probe gives the respondent a relatively wide choice of responses, where a more closed question may direct the answers in a certain direction.

Before the semi-structured interviews were conducted I found the preparation for follow-up questions difficult. Levy and Hollan (2015) emphasise the implications of an anthropologist’s interviewing skills, and note how challenges such as leading questions, not making the interviewee comfortable in the interview situation and misunderstandings could potentially damage the results from the field work. A large proportion of the qualitative research literature, which includes person-centred ethnography, focuses on how the researcher can acquire neutrality in the interview setting. It therefore took me a while to realise that I as the researcher could not achieve full neutrality in the interview setting, especially not with semi-structured interviews. In one way this is similar to the observations and research positions. However, in the interview situation the researcher needs to find the right position and balance regarding structure. In the interviews I found it most appropriate to adopt a role that tends towards open structure and interaction with the informants to drive the interview forward in the form of a conversation. In my experience I also found it easier to create an interview situation based on trust in a natural atmosphere where I could participate in the interaction, and with practice the follow up questions also came more naturally. This active interaction was however, challenging in a similar way to the abovementioned roles in observations and required even more from my contextual understanding. Perspectives that the researcher has to take into account are, for example, how much of one’s own ideas, perspectives and meanings should be shared in the interview situation and the social/cultural context of where the interview is conducted.

## *Analysis*

In this section I will briefly explain the analytical process conducted where the data collected were transformed into results. The first stage in the process was to transcribe the interviews and observations from recordings and notes into manageable text. Thereafter the text was shortened and participant opinions were distilled. In the next stage of the analysis principles from *case analysis (personsentrete tilnærminger)* were adopted. In case analyses a central aspect is that the data are analysed as a whole, meaning that each topic or person analysed must be seen up against the whole material (Thagaard, 2009). The first step in case analysis was to categorise the data material. Specific sentences or paragraphs were identified and later put into categories. After this process I had a total of six categories that were analysed in the interpretation of the material.

Thagaard (2009) makes a point that when analysis of categories is adopted, the interpretation can draw on more people-focused analysis or theme-based analysis. In agreement with Levy and Hollan (2015), the first two steps in the analytical process were transcription and shortening of data conducted with a person-centred approach. In both interview and observation data the whole person was in focus, and I attempted to be aware of and register nonverbal communication such as emotional state, gestures, physical movements, excitement and boredom. However, I did not take notes in the interview situation, since this may have been a distraction. I rather attempted to be aware of the respondent's reactions and described these in the transcriptions.

I changed approach for the next stage in the analyses. While the first stage of the analyses was person-centred the second draws more on theme analysis. In answering the research questions, local participant perspectives of a selection of themes were more valued than making person-centred interpretations. Thus, in developing categories the subject's opinions and reflections were in focus. This is reflected in the results presented in the article, which represent local perspectives in four topics related to the research question and the SDP field.

### *Field work in a foreign culture and ethical reflections*

In Thagaard (2009) field work in a different culture is based on the idea that the researcher attempts to create understandings from the inside of the culture under investigation, while at the same time taking a distant perspective as an outsider. The researcher has, through this insider with an outsider perspective, the advantage of asking questions that the informants may take for granted. The social and cultural aspects of the society where the field work is carried out can affect the communication between researcher and the respondents. As a white male researcher conducting research in a predominantly black community in post-apartheid South Africa there are certain challenges to be navigated. In Jeanes and Kay (2013) two significant ethical challenges in relation to conducting research in the Global South are explored. The first challenge surrounds the praxis of informed consent and the second is power relations in the research setting. Gaining informed consent can be challenging in any research context, and often gets even more difficult when conducting research in an oral culture where maybe English is at best spoken as a second language. Standard university requirements often include written consent from any research participant, and in cases where the informant is under the age of 18 a written consent should be signed by a parent/guardian. As I was conducting a master thesis at NIH the project had to go through an approval process at the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) before any data collection could begin. Their main task is to assure that the project can protect participant anonymity and data security regarding privacy. This project was subject to notification, and attached in the application was an interview guide, observation guide, information letter and a scheme for written consent from participants. The project was approved on the 15.10.2014 with no interference or comments. In the research process all respondents for the interviews received a NSD approved information letter and all respondents signed a written consent for participation (Appendix 2). As mentioned, all participants in this study spoke fluent English, and there were no participants under the age of 18 years. For securing participant anonymity the data was collected, stored and then deleted according to NSD protocol. In the article, participants, the community and the NGO are given pseudonyms for informant protection.

The second theme brought forward by Jeanes and Kay (2013) relates to the issue of power relations in SDP research. With the cultural context for the field work at hand, the

historical background colonised/coloniser relationship cannot be ignored. As an external researcher representing the Global North, I had to be aware that my associations could possibly distort the relationship between researcher and participant, as well as my findings. Jeanes and Kay (2013) illustrate that although participants apparently want to consent to take part in research, they may feel obliged to participate due to the Global North/South power dynamics. The same dynamics can also play a part in that participants may tell the researcher what they think he/she wants to hear. Furthermore, the authors also make the case for ethical value, arguing that all research should provide demonstrable benefit outcomes. There are no specific techniques or formulae with which to deal with these issues of power, however, my preconceptions and local knowledge from previous years was helpful. For example, I was careful of using the term “research” or “researcher” too frequently, since I learnt from my year as a sport volunteer in Madala town that this was still a “dirty word”. Instead, I explained the purpose of my stay and study in other terms.

These power dynamics are also related to my position in the field, and in the insider/outsider section it is emphasised that I deliberately chose to seek distance from the MCSC. In Madala Town the MCSC is still, five years down the line, a structure that the community is proud of, and the indoor Astroturf is unique in the area. From my pre-knowledge I knew that if associated with the MCSC in, for example, a funding context, I would be met with praise wherever I went and my informants would tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. I thus adopted a distance to the centre and stressed my intention to learn more about the local perspectives. It is difficult to judge whether this worked as was intended, and it would be naïve to assume that these efforts neutralised the power differences that stem from colonialism. Jeanes and Kay (2013) highlight how certain efforts may assist researchers in minimising the power differences. The authors emphasise the benefits of extended duration of the field with work, where ongoing relationships between researcher and participants can be established through returning to the communities follow up after the field work. As well as maintaining ongoing relationships, the authors have shared their results back to the participants and NGOs, this can, however, involve challenges if, for example, participants/NGO expectations of the research are not met.

Efforts such as these in minimising power differences are important and valuable for researchers in analysing and producing data. But the ultimate ethical challenge that cannot be adjusted for is the historical and inherent relationship between the Global North and Global South. The only way to overcome this challenge would be to remove the imbalanced relationship between the Global North researcher and the Global South participant.

### ***Reflections from data collection: Validity, reliability and generalisability***

Validity, reliability and generalisability are all terms that are used in qualitative research to judge quality of the research process. Validity is a term that describes how plausible and trustworthy the presented data is (Thagaard, 2009). As a master student with limited research experience in a foreign country and culture, I have attempted to represent local perspectives and knowledge in a SDP context. In this research process my preconception, knowledge and social constructive stance are important for judging the validity of the scientific research conducted. I have, in the above sections, described the methods employed in this study, my research position and analytical process and how interpretation has ended in the results presented in the article.

Reliability is a term that describes replicability in the research process (Bryman, 2008). In Thagaard (2009) reliability is more associated with quantitative studies, where the research methods utilised should be explained well enough so that, if employed under the same conditions the results would be reproduced. In qualitative research traditions, where preconceptions, interpretations and personal relations are so determinant the replicability in the research process is challenging. This is often one of the main criticisms against qualitative research, and it is essential that a researcher in the qualitative research tradition explains how personal relations, preconceptions and experience may affect the empirical data collection and analytical processes.

Generalisation, as a term, involves drawing broad implications from particular observations. As with reliability, generalisation is also a term that often gets more associated with quantitative research, and is more controversial in qualitative research. In

most qualitative research the population selected for answering the research question is often much smaller than in quantitative research, and therefore broad generalisations are less represented. The goal in most qualitative research, however, is not to generalise about large populations, but to contribute with rich, contextualised understanding and knowledge on human experience through study of particular cases (Thagaard, 2009). A central debate in this research project is related to evidence in SDP. In an environment where evidence for improving practice is so highly rated, generalisations in relation to knowledge are important. Through making the claim for local knowledge production and highlighting how local knowledge can contribute towards better SDP practice and policy production this project attempts to make wide generalisations as an example of how such research and knowledge could contribute towards better SDP practice. However, at the same time I must emphasise that the findings represented here are contextual and represent participant experience only found in this particular SDP community. Additionally, the direct transferability or generalisation of findings related to SDP programmes must be seen as limited. The reason for this is that the contexts where SDP programs are delivered, as well as their intended beneficiaries, may differ in infinitely different and unknown ways.

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## **Appendix 2**

### **Request for Research Project Participation**

#### ***Relating Sport and Development discourse to the local experience***

##### **Background and aim**

The aim of this project is to look at how young people from a community in South Africa, in which Sport and Development (SDP) -supported programmes are used, and how they experience sport and movement. To understand how sport, movement and SDP programs are experienced in this community an ethnographic research program will be conducted, which will include interviews and participatory observations. This study will us get a better understanding of how Sport, movement and SDP programs are experienced and carried out in a community in the Global South.

##### **What does participation in this study entail?**

When participating in this study you will be taking part in an interview of an approximately 45 minutes to an hour. The questions will concern your experience with Mbekweni Community Sport Centre and your experience with sport and development. The interview is audio recorded, and the information in this interview will be the basis of collected data in this master degree project.

##### **What will happen with your information?**

All personal information is strictly confidential, and the information will only be processed by me, at no point will I share with anyone who I interview or talk to in the community. I will keep the data on a password-restricted electronic device, separate from the actual data. The project is planned to end 15.06.2015, and all data collected (recordings, raw data and processed data) will be deleted on this date. All information used in the thesis will be anonymised and made unrecognisable, this means that your name and the name of the community will be changed.

## **Participation is voluntary**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and should you wish you may back out at any time without the need to give a reason. Should you back out all personal information will be anonymised.

Should you wish to participate or have questions concerning the project contact: Torstein Midtlien +4798033861 /0825424868 email: Tmidltien87@gmail.com

The study is a part of the private research authority, the Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

## **Consent for participation**

I have read and understood the above information and am willing to participate

-----

(Participant signature, date)

## Receipt from NSD

### Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS

NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Reidar Säfvenbom  
Seksjon for kroppsøving og pedagogikk Norges idrettshøgskole  
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Org.nr. 985 321 884

Vår dato: 15.10.2014

Vår ref: 40177 / 3 / LT

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

#### TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 07.10.2014.

Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>40177</i>	<i>Relating Sport and Development discourse to the local experience</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>Norges idrettshøgskole, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Reidar Säfvenbom</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Torstein Midtlien</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 15.06.2015, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger

Vennlig hilsen  
Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Lis Tenold

Kontaktperson: Lis Tenold tlf: 55 58 33 77

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Torstein Midtlien [tmidtlien87@gmail.com](mailto:tmidtlien87@gmail.com)

*Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.*

*Avdelingskontorer / District Offices:*

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## Personvernombudet for forskning



### Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 40177

Utvalget informeres skriftlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskrivet er godt utformet.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forsker etterfølger Norges idrettshøgskole sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på privat pc/mobile enheter, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 15.06.2015. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:

- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette lydopptak

