

More than just a game?

The potential of sport programmes to foster positive youth development among disadvantaged girls

Thesis submitted for the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of doctor in
Movement and Sport Sciences

Hebe Schaillée
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Marc Theeboom

April 2016



The series "SASO" is a publication of the SASO research group of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. The researchers – active in the fields of quality management in sports, social value of sports, elite sports policy and career transition in elite sports – want to build bridges between scientific knowledge and policy making and management in sports. The central thought of the series is to translate scientific knowledge critically into the practice of the sports domain: it will help practitioners and policy makers from various sports settings in finding ideas and tools they can use in their daily work.

© 2016 Hebe Schaillée

Photo cover: JES vzw

SUPERVISOR

Prof. Dr. Marc Theeboom (Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium)

COMMITTEE

Prof. Dr. Paul Wylleman (Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium) - (Chairman)

Prof. Dr. Kristine De Martelaer (Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium)

Prof. Dr. Caroline Andries (Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium)

Prof. Dr. Rudi Roose (Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Ghent University, Belgium)

Prof. Dr. Inge Claringbould (Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance, Utrecht University, the Netherlands)

To date, there is no conclusive evidence with regard to the outcomes that young people derive from their participation in sport. A body of literature relates youth sport involvement to various positive developmental experiences (i.e., type of outcomes) on personal and interpersonal level. However, negative experiences relating to youth sport involvement have also been reported. The variations in these findings could possibly be due to the fact that most authors regarded sport as a unitary phenomenon and were primarily focused on measuring outcomes without considering the possible influence of programme components. Although researchers have recognised that components of a youth (sport) programme related to the organisation or staff may be critical for developmental processes (e.g., Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015), this type of research is still in its infancy. Furthermore, it should be noticed that a vast majority of existing research is based on samples of middle-class white youth, often because disadvantaged youth in general and disadvantaged girls in particular are simply underserved in the domain of sport. Moreover, in studies focusing on disadvantaged youth, there is often a preponderance of boys over girls, probably because of two reasons. First, because boys and men still have a higher participation rate in organised sport. Second, because sports-based prevention or intervention programmes that use sport as a means are primarily targeting boys.

The point of departure of this PhD study has been to explore which programme components are helpful, not helpful and could be changed to improve the effectiveness (in terms of fostering developmental outcomes) of sport programmes targeting disadvantaged girls. The central research question is therefore whether or not this PhD study has generated a better understanding in how sport programmes working with disadvantaged girls can effectively generate developmental outcomes? To fully explore this central research question, this PhD study contains four separate research chapters.

The aim of the first chapter was to explore the relationship between peer group composition in sport programmes and positive youth development (PYD) in disadvantaged girls and to determine whether this relationship was moderated by participants' personal characteristics. This quantitative research was set up because it has been argued that individual characteristics of participants shape the environment that mediates the programme for each participant (Weiss, 1998), but that such research in the domain of youth sport is sorely lacking (for an exception see Denault & Poulin, 2007). Two hundred young women aged between 10 and 24 involved in martial arts or urban dance programmes completed a questionnaire including the 'Youth Experience Survey for Sport' (YES-S) (MacDonald, Côté, Eys, & Deakin, 2012) and questions regarding participants' socio-economic characteristics (i.e., migration background, education level, household structure). Multilevel regression analyses were performed using MLwiN 2.30 to take into account the hierarchical data structure. At the group level, a higher percentage of girls from a low educational track and with a migration background predicted greater PYD, as indicated by higher levels of personal and social skills, cognitive skills and goal setting. Results showed interaction effects

from 14.7% (personal and social skills) to 30.3% (cognitive skills). The findings revealed that the extent to which disadvantaged girls derive benefits from their participation in sport also depends on the group composition. The interaction effects between the group composition and individual characteristics suggest that when girls participate in a group of similar peers, those from non-intact families will derive more benefits than their counterparts from intact families.

The group composition (i.e., an element largely related to the organisation of a youth sport programme) is merely one component that may be critical for developmental processes. Another important programme component in youth sport programmes is the social psychological climate (i.e., containing all social mechanisms within a setting that help to shape one's perceptions of what is valued). The motivational climate is one of these mechanisms that has an impact on an individual perceived competence. Perceived competence is according to Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory (SDT) (2000) one fundamental psychological need to initiate an individual's innate tendencies towards development. Furthermore, it has been indicated that that perceived competence has a greater impact on youth's development than the two other fundamental psychological needs in all forms of physical activity (Feltz, 1988; Ntoumanis, 2001). However, the degree to which perceptions of competence are fulfilled depends, amongst others, on the nature of the learning environment or the motivational climate created by significant others (Ames, 1992; Treasure & Roberts, 1998). The aim of chapter 2 was, therefore, to investigate the roles of the coach- and, the largely unexplored, peer-created motivational climate in sport. Furthermore, we examined if, and how, coach- and peer-created motivational climates moderated the developmental experiences based on participants' personal characteristics. Also for this second study we had two hundred young females aged between 10 and 24 living in Flanders who completed a questionnaire including the 'Youth Experience Survey for Sport' (YES-S; MacDonald, Côté, Eys, & Deakin, 2012), the 'Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports' (MCSYS; Smith, Cumming, & Smoll, 2008), the 'Peer Motivational Climate in Youth Sport Questionnaire' (PeerMCYSQ; Ntoumanis & Vazou, 2005) and questions regarding participants' socio-economic characteristics (i.e., migration background, education, family situation). Multilevel regression analyses were performed using MLwiN 2.30 to take into account the hierarchical data structure. The analysis revealed that a more mastery-oriented coaching climate predicted greater PYD, as indicated by higher levels of initiative, personal and social skills, cognitive skills and goal setting. A performance-oriented coaching climate and an intra-team conflict peer climate were positively related to cognitive skills. In addition, results showed that higher improvement peer climate perception scores were associated with higher scores on personal initiative among Belgian respondents, but not among girls with a migration background. Finally, the results showed that higher effort peer climate perception scores were associated with higher scores on negative experiences among girls from non-intact families, but not among girls from intact families. The findings of this study offer insights into

As already mentioned, the motivational climate represents just one mechanism related to the social psychological climate of a youth sport programme. Theory-driven research suggest that the peer- and coach-created social psychological climate can influence participants' developmental outcomes in at least four other ways including modelling, social approval, dialogue about and resolution of moral dilemmas and the caring climate (Newton et al., 2007; Weiss et al., 2008). However, existing research related to the influence of the social psychological climate has been focusing merely on sport participants' perceptions of the motivational climate (Smith, Cumming, & Smoll, 2008) and caring climate (Newton et al., 2007), probably because valid and reliable measures only exist for these two social mechanisms. The aim of chapter 3 was, therefore, to gain more insight into the different social mechanisms leading to perceived developmental outcomes among disadvantaged girls. For this third chapter, three Flemish urban-dance based programmes were selected in which data were collected by means of in-depth interviews and observations with female participants who have a disadvantaged background (N=25). Results revealed that, next to the motivational climate, there are as expected other social mechanisms through which significant others, including adult staff and peers, can have an impact on participating youth's perceived benefits. Identified mechanisms include observational learning, participants' perceptions of coaches' autonomy supportive behaviours and caring climate. In addition, we found that the inherent characteristics of urban dance provide a unique context for facilitating an autonomy supportive coaching climate. This study, therefore, adds to existing literature in the way it connects sport-related (urban dance) characteristics with young people's opportunities for positive youth development.

In chapter 4 we seek to understand the experiences of those who deliver specific sports-based developmental programmes for disadvantaged youth in general, and girls in particular. For this final chapter, a comparative multiple case-study was set up to increase our understanding regarding the overall specific methodology required for working with disadvantaged young people in a sport context. A multiple case study approach was used in preference to a single case study to illustrate differences and commonalities of sports-based developmental programmes targeting disadvantaged youth. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with coaches and other key stakeholders (e.g., welfare workers) (N=14). From this multiple case study, we learned that sports-based developmental programmes are in itself a very diverse category. However, despite the differences between the selected programmes that deliberately choose to use sport as a developmental tool we have noticed a number of commonalities related to the coaching climate (i.e., an emphasis on socio-psychological competence building, autonomy support and the coach's perceptivity towards participants well-being and effort) and specific opportunities for participating youth (i.e., possibility to engage in competition and additional activities). These commonalities could be described as key elements in working towards developmental outcomes with disadvantaged

Based on the results of this PhD study we know that organised sport programmes have the ability to foster PYD, and that sport activities have the capacity to reach and connect with young people who might not be reached by other organised leisure provisions. This finding should encourage us to further study such sport programmes, with the overall aim to contribute to their improvement in providing participating youth a meaningful and useful context in terms of personal and social development.

In vergelijking met andere jongeren hebben meisjes in maatschappelijk kwetsbare situaties vaak meer negatieve ervaringen binnen het onderwijs en de vrije tijd. Vaker worden ze immers geconfronteerd met uitsluiting, discriminatie en gevoelens van mislukking. Dit is erg nadelig voor hun ontwikkeling. Sport wordt steeds meer gezien als een mogelijkheid voor deze groep om positieve ontwikkelingservaringen te beleven. Onderzoek naar sportprojecten voor maatschappelijk kwetsbare groepen toont echter aan dat het aanbieden van sport op zich geen positieve effecten op dat vlak genereert. De mate waarin sport een positieve impact zou kunnen hebben, hangt immers sterk af van de context in dewelke het aangeboden wordt. Dit onderzoek focust op initiatieven die urban dance of vechtsport aanbieden. Het zijn beide populaire sporten bij meisjes in kwetsbare situaties. Tot op heden werden de ervaringen van deelnemers en de rol van contextuele factoren, zoals onder meer de groepssamenstelling, in dergelijke sportinitiatieven nog maar zelden in kaart gebracht. In dit doctoraatsonderzoek werd dan ook nagegaan in welke mate dergelijke sportpraktijken kunnen bijdragen aan een positieve jeugdontwikkeling en welke contextuele factoren bevorderlijk, belemmerend en bijgestuurd kunnen worden om de effectiviteit van deze sportpraktijken te optimaliseren.

Het onderzoek omvat vier studies, bestaande uit twee kwantitatieve en twee kwalitatieve studies. In de eerste studie werd onderzocht of (a) het participeren aan georganiseerde sport positieve ontwikkelingservaringen kan bewerkstelligen, alsook of (b) de groep waarin iemand sport mee bepaalt of iemand positieve of negatieve ontwikkelingservaringen heeft. In de tweede studie werd nagegaan of de impact van het motivationeel klimaat (m.a.w. een vaardigheidsgericht of prestatiegericht klimaat) ten aanzien van positieve jeugdontwikkeling bij meisjes in maatschappelijk kwetsbare situaties afhankelijk is van de sociale actor(en) met name, de coach of teamgenoten die het klimaat creëren. Door gebruik te maken van de 'Youth Experience Survey for Sport' (YES-S; MacDonald, Côté, Eys, & Deakin, 2012) werd nagegaan of sportpraktijken bijdragen aan positieve jeugdontwikkeling. Om de relatie tussen de positieve ontwikkelingservaringen, de groepssamenstelling waarin deelnemers sporten en het motivationeel klimaat te onderzoeken, werd gebruik gemaakt van een multi-level analyse die rekening hield met verschillende aggregatieniveaus. De ervaringen van 200 (maatschappelijk kwetsbare) meisjes werden voor deze eerste twee studies geanalyseerd. Een hoger percentage van meisjes in het technisch of beroepsgeoriënteerd onderwijs en met een migratie-achtergrond blijkt op groepsniveau gerelateerd te zijn aan meer gerapporteerde ontwikkelingservaringen met betrekking tot persoonlijke en sociale vaardigheden, cognitieve vaardigheden en het vooropstellen van doelen. Een homogene groepssamenstelling leidt echter niet altijd per definitie tot een even kansrijke leeromgeving voor alle deelnemers. Dit blijkt uit de interactie-effecten met betrekking tot de gezinssamenstelling. Deze interactie-effecten tonen aan dat het hebben van een specifiek kenmerk (m.a.w. niet leven bij beide biologische ouders) een versterkend effect heeft ten aanzien van de leerervaringen in functie van de groep (aandeel meisjes die niet bij beide biologische ouders leven) waarin er gesport wordt.

gezinssamenstelling) dan meisjes die wel bij hun beide biologische ouders leven. De resultaten uit de tweede studie tonen aan dat een vaardigheidsgericht klimaat van de coach een voorspeller is voor meer positieve ontwikkelingservaringen met betrekking tot initiatief, persoonlijke en sociale vaardigheden, cognitieve vaardigheden en het vooropstellen van doelen. Een prestatiegericht klimaat en intrateam conflicten bleken positief gerelateerd te zijn aan cognitieve vaardigheden. Er werd ook vastgesteld dat één specifieke subschaal van het vaardigheidsgericht motivationeel klimaat gecreëerd door leeftijdsgenoten, waarin het verbeteren van vaardigheden centraal staat een versterkend effect heeft ten aanzien van het initiatief dat Belgische meisjes nemen. Dit effect bleek echter niet significant te zijn voor de meisjes met een migratie-achtergrond. Tot slot, bleek ook dat hogere scores op de subschaal met betrekking tot inspanning (één van de drie subschalen die het vaardigheidsgericht klimaat van leeftijdsgenoten mee vorm geeft) geassocieerd werden met meer negatieve ervaringen bij meisjes die niet bij hun beide biologische ouders leven. Dit effect was niet significant voor meisjes die wel bij hun beide biologische ouders leven. Deze tweede studie geeft ons niet enkel een beter inzicht in de rol van het motivationeel klimaat dat de coach creëert ten aanzien van ontwikkelingservaringen maar belicht ook de impact van het motivationeel klimaat dat leeftijdsgenoten creëren, hetgeen tot op heden nog maar zelden in kaart werd gebracht. De verklaringskracht van de statistische modellen uit deze eerste twee studies, bestaande uit onder meer de socio-economische en migratie-achtergrond van de deelnemers (nationaliteit, opleiding en gezinssamenstelling) uit een team en het motivationeel klimaat gecreëerd door de coach en leeftijdsgenoten, variëren tussen de 28.2% (vooropstellen van doelen) en 35.9% (initiatief nemen). Dit wil zeggen dat 71.8% - 64.1% van de totale variantie mogelijks verklaard kan worden door andere factoren (vb. kenmerken van de begeleiding). De totale variantie bestaat uit de variantie tussen de groepen en de variantie tussen de individuen binnen hun groep. Aangezien de groepssamenstelling en het motivationeel klimaat slechts deels bepalen of iemand positieve of negatieve ervaringen heeft, was het van belang om na te gaan welke andere factoren/mechanismen een invloed zouden kunnen hebben ten aanzien van iemands positieve jeugdontwikkeling.

Het doel van de derde studie was bijgevolg om een beter inzicht te verwerven in de verschillende psycho-sociale mechanismen die positieve ontwikkelingservaringen kunnen faciliteren. Aangezien er tot op heden slechts voor twee psycho-sociale mechanismen valide en betrouwbare meetinstrumenten werden ontwikkeld, werd aan de hand van observaties en diepte-interviews bij maatschappelijk kwetsbare meisjes (N=25) nagegaan welke psycho-sociale mechanismen bijdragen tot positieve sportgerelateerde ontwikkelingservaringen. De onderzoeksresultaten tonen aan dat, zoals verwacht, niet enkel het motivationeel klimaat een rol speelt maar dat ook andere psycho-sociale mechanismen een impact hebben ten aanzien van de ontwikkelingservaringen van deelnemers. Uit deze studie bleek ook dat modeling of m.a.w. observationeel leren, veilige en ondersteunende relaties met coaches en autonomie ondersteunend gedrag van coaches een belangrijke rol spelen. Er werd bovendien vastgesteld

In de vierde en laatste studie werd de implementatie van zes sport-plusprogramma's, waarin sport wordt gebruikt als middel voor de persoonlijke en sociale ontwikkeling van maatschappelijk kwetsbare jongeren, vergeleken en geëvalueerd. Deze studie maakte gebruik van data uit diepte-interviews (N=14) met coaches en andere individuen uit het werkveld, zoals jeugdwelzijnswerkers. Uit deze studie hebben we geleerd dat sport-plusprogramma's zeer divers zijn. Ondanks een aantal duidelijke verschillen, zoals bijvoorbeeld de grote van de deelnemersgroepen, hebben we een aantal overeenkomsten in kaart gebracht. Het gaat onder meer over specifieke opportuniteiten die jongeren in dergelijke programma's aangeboden krijgen zoals het kunnen deelnemen aan competities, extrasportieve activiteiten (bijv. teambuildingsweekend) of aanvullende activiteiten die tot doel hebben om de persoonlijke en sociale ontwikkeling van jongeren te stimuleren (bijv. vrijwilliger zijn tijdens events). Verder bleken er ook overeenkomsten te bestaan in het klimaat dat coaches in dergelijke initiatieven creëren. Er werd door de coaches uit alle geselecteerde initiatieven belang gehecht aan het welzijn van jongeren, het ontwikkelen van socio-psychologische competenties, creëren van een autonomie-ondersteunend klimaat en erkennen van de inspanningen van deelnemers.

Finally! The past six years were without doubt a very challenging and enriching period in my life. Although I tend to refer to this as my PhD, none of this would have been possible without the invaluable support and guidance of my supervisor, colleagues, family and friends.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Dr. Marc Theeboom. I am extremely appreciative for his support, patience, understanding and advice. Marc was not only a tremendous supervisor, he also served as an inspiring coach. I lost count on how many times I would be utterly discouraged, hopeless and demoralised. Marc relentlessly picked me up and helped me bounce back on my feet. The energy and enthusiasm he has for his research was motivational for me, and helped me during tough times in the PhD pursuit.

I would also like to thank Jelle Van Cauwenberg, Eivind Skille and Rein Haudenhuyse for their willingness to cooperate as a co-author in one or several papers.

The richness and depth of the data discussed in this PhD study would not have been possible without the input of programme coordinators, welfare workers, coaches and young people who agreed to patiently share their experiences with me.

All my colleagues from the Sport & Society research group have also contributed to the completion of this study. They have been a source of friendship and mutual motivational strength.

A warm thank you towards my family for their ongoing love and support. My husband Thomas and my son Mathis, for the numerous joyful moments that we have spend together. My parents, Christine and Johan, who have always supported me. My brother (Eli) and his family (Sara, Amber and Aaro), who believed that I would reach the finish line of this research training process. Other family members and my family in law who have also encouraged me to persevere.

1. The positive youth development perspective	2
2. The impact of the ecology of youth	2
3. Sex differences	3
4. The developmental potential of organised sport	4
5. The accessibility and popularity of sport activities among disadvantaged youth	5
6. A marginalised group in the domain of sport	6
7. Evaluating programmes or components	7
8. Necessary and sufficient conditions	8
9. The Flemish sports landscape	10
10. Aims of the PhD	11
11. Brief outline of the PhD study	12
12. References	14
Introduction of the first chapter	22
<hr/>	
CHAPTER 1: What Makes a Difference for Disadvantaged Girls? Investigating the interplay between Group Composition and Positive Youth Development in Sport.	24
<hr/>	
1. Abstract	24
2. Introduction	25
2.1 Domains of Learning Experiences in Sport	25
2.2 Peer groups	26
2.3 Disadvantaged girls	27
3. Study	27
4. Method	29
4.1 Participants	29
4.2 Procedures	31
4.3 Data analysis	32
5. Results	32
5.1 Reliability and Descriptive Statistics	32
5.2 Relationships between Developmental Experiences and Group Composition	33
6. Discussion	39
7. Conclusions	42
8. References	44
Introduction of the second chapter	50
<hr/>	
CHAPTER 2: Peer- and Coach-created Motivational Climates: Implications for Positive Youth Development for Disadvantaged Girls.	52
<hr/>	
1. Abstract	52
2. Introduction	53
2.1 Motivational climate	53

3. Study	56
4. Method	57
4.1 Participants	57
4.2 Measures	58
4.3 Procedures.....	61
4.4 Data analysis.....	61
5. Results.....	62
5.1 Descriptive statistics.....	62
5.2 Relationships between perceived motivational climate and positive youth development	63
6. Discussion	67
7. Conclusions.....	71
8. Acknowledgements.....	72
9. References	72
Introduction of the third chapter	78
<hr/>	
CHAPTER 3: Adolescent girls’ experiences of urban dance programmes: A qualitative analysis of Flemish initiatives targeting disadvantaged youth.....	80
<hr/>	
1. Abstract.....	80
2. Introduction.....	81
2.1 Social mechanisms	82
2.2 Urban dance	83
3. Study	83
4. Context.....	83
4.1 Urban dance programmes.....	84
5. Methods of the study.....	85
5.1 Participants.....	85
5.2 Data collection.....	86
5.3 Data Analysis.....	87
6. Results.....	87
6.1 Conditions that enabled girls’ regular involvement	87
6.2 Interactions between peers.....	88
6.3 Interactions between participants and members of the coaching staff.....	89
6.4 Perceived benefits.....	90
7. Discussion	92
8. Conclusion	95
9. References	95
Introduction of the fourth chapter.....	100

1. Abstract.....	102
2. Introduction.....	103
3. Methods of the study.....	103
4. Description of the sports-based developmental programmes.....	105
5. Results and discussion	107
5.1 Common elements.....	107
5.2 Distinguishing features	112
6. Conclusions.....	114
7. References.....	117
<hr/>	
GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	122
<hr/>	
1. Looking into the black box.....	122
2. Theoretical perspective and general considerations	123
2.1 Research paradigms	123
2.2 A pragmatist perspective.....	124
2.3 PhD study.....	125
2.4 Positive youth development.....	126
3. Encountered challenges.....	127
4. Returning to our point of departure	129
5. Study highlights	130
6. Implications of the study	132
7. Strengths of the study.....	133
8. Limitations of the study	134
9. Future research pathways	137
10. References	139
<hr/>	
APPENDICES.....	146
<hr/>	

CHAPTER 1

Table 1. Additional descriptive statistics of the sample ($n = 200$)	30
Table 2. Descriptive statistics for dependent variables (means with standard deviations and reliability values between brackets) ($n = 200$).....	33
Table 3. Results of the regression model predicting positive developmental experiences	34

CHAPTER 2

Table 1. Additional descriptive statistics of the sample ($n = 200$)	58
Table 2. Descriptive statistics for dependent variables (means with standard deviations and reliability values between brackets) ($n = 200$).....	63
Table 3. Results of the regression model predicting positive developmental experiences	64
Table 4. Results of the regression model predicting negative experiences	66

CHAPTER 4

Table 1. Participants	104
Table 2. Description of the sports-based developmental programmes.....	106
Table 3. Overview of commonalities and distinguishing features of six sports-based developmental programmes	107

Figure 1. Representation of the four different studies 13

CHAPTER 1

Figure 1. Interaction effect for goal setting between the respondents' family structures on the participant and team levels. 36

Figure 2. Interaction effect for personal and social skills between the respondents' family structures on the participant level and team level. 37

Figure 3. Interaction effect for initiative between the respondents' family structures on the participant level and team level. 38

CHAPTER 2

Figure 1. Interaction effect for initiative between the respondents' migration background and level of improvement. 65

Figure 2. Interaction effect for the probability of not reporting negative experiences between respondents' family structure and the level of effort. 67

1. THE POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Positive youth development (PYD) is a strength-based perspective of adolescence that suggests that all young people possess the potential for positive, successful and healthy development (Lerner et al., 2005). The core ideas within the PYD perspective are (1) the plasticity of human development and (2) the importance of relations between individuals and their real world ecological settings (Lerner, 2005). The first idea holds that every adolescent has the personal potential or personal strength to change the course of his or her development. The second idea indicates that youth development can be positively influenced by the strengths or resources available in the social institutions (e.g., school) with whom young people interact (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Semsal, 2006). The key hypothesis within the PYD perspective is that every young person's development can be enhanced if the strengths of youths are aligned across adolescence with development supportive ecological resources (Lerner, 2009; Lerner, Phelps, Forman, & Bowers, 2009).

The PYD perspective is a conceptual alternative to long-held deficit-based models of this developmental period (e.g., Lerner, 2009). A deficit-based perspective focuses on the problems of individuals or families that need to be 'fixed' by experts (Maton, Dodgen, Leadbeater, Sandler, Schellenbach, & Solarz, 2004). Lewin-Bizan, Bowers and Lerner (2010) suggested that a PYD perspective provides not only a different conceptual model for research on adolescent development, but also a different focus for policies and programmes aimed at enhancing the life chances of young people from different backgrounds. They indicated that instead of searching for conditions that may decrease problem behaviours or prevent problems from occurring, the PYD perspective broadens the scope of research to include individual and context relations that have a positive impact on an adolescent's thriving. From a PYD perspective thriving in adolescence is not seen as the absence of problems (e.g., absence of bullying, drinking, unsafe sex, school failure, substance use). Instead, thriving is regarded as the growth of positive characteristics that mark a healthy young person (e.g., 6 C's of PYD including competence, confidence, character, connection, caring and contribution) (e.g., Eccles & Gootman, 2002). In turn, this perspective suggests that policies should not only be focused on problem reduction or prevention, but also on fostering conditions that promote thriving of adolescents.

2. THE IMPACT OF THE ECOLOGY OF YOUTH

Conditions that promote thriving are under-investigated in some contexts such as workplaces where young people spend portions of their time (King et al., 2011), but received substantial attention in other social contexts including families, schools and neighbourhoods (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015). Theokas and Lerner (2006), for example, examined indices of PYD - operationalized by the 6 C's (Lerner, 2004; Lerner et al., 2005) - and negative developmental outcomes - such as depression, delinquency and substance use - in adolescents' families, schools and neighbourhoods. The findings of their study indicated, amongst others, that families, schools and neighbourhoods can play a crucial role in fostering

Findings of Theokas and Lerner's study (2006) concur with other investigations regarding the potential positive and negative influence that families, schools and neighbourhoods can have on the development of adolescents (e.g., Youngblade, Theokas, Schulenberg, Curry, Huang & Novak, 2007). In other words, the impact of families, schools and neighbourhoods on adolescents PYD can vary significantly.

Researchers have learned that there are several risk factors (i.e., negative influences on a young person's life) and protective factors (i.e., positive influences on a young person's life) that can hinder or foster an adolescent's thriving. It has been found that outcomes worsen as risk factors pile up in adolescent's lives (Masten, 1997). For example, youth with fewer opportunities to engage in collective activities in their families (e.g., eating dinner together) reported less positive indices of PYD (Theokas & Lerner, 2006). Other risk factors related to the family are, amongst others, poor parental supervision and discipline, conflict with family members, low income and poor housing (Youth Justice Board, 2005). Research that investigated differences at the school level found that youths on lower educational tracks appear to have lower perceptions of school membership (Smerdon, 2002) and a lower sense of belonging in class (Van Houtte & Maele, 2012) compared to those in higher educational tracks. School disorganisation (e.g., organisational change in schools) can also hinder youth's positive developmental outcomes and promote youth's negative developmental outcomes (Youth Justice Board, 2005). It has been reported that, compared to other youth, disadvantaged youth is often characterised by more negative experiences in their institutional contacts which leads to more negative and less positive developmental outcomes (Vettenburg & Walgrave, 2009). The notion of 'disadvantaged youth' refers, in essence, to a segment of young people with fewer opportunities (i.e., less protective factors and/or more risk factors) to thrive than their peers (Butts, Bazemore, & Meroe, 2010). Other frequently used terms to describe this youth segment are 'socially vulnerable youth', 'youth-at-risk', 'disconnected youth', 'socially excluded youth' or 'disaffected youth' (e.g., Bendit & Stokes, 2003).

3. SEX DIFFERENCES

The outcomes that adolescents derive from their involvement in their families, schools and neighbourhoods differ not only according to young people's degree of social vulnerability but is also related to their sex. Theokas and Lerner (2006) found, for example, that the sex of an individual was significantly related to both indices of PYD and risk behaviours. In their sample, girls reported higher scores on the positive developmental outcomes (i.e., competence, confidence, character, connection, caring and contribution) and lower scores on delinquency. Since Theokas and Lerner's (2006) finding is consistent with other empirical evidence (see e.g., Theokas et al., 2005), they have suggested that future research should examine PYD separately by sex. They suggested that girls could experience the school, family and neighbourhood environments in consistently different ways than boys and such differences may be reflected in different observed ecological assets (i.e., contextual factors that positively or negatively influence indices of PYD) and that social contexts consequently have differential

experience aforementioned social contexts differently across a number of constructs (e.g., teachers' belief in adolescents' cognitive/academic attainment; parents' belief in their children's mathematics ability; the proportion of positive feedback from teachers), which could result in different developmental outcomes (Jacobs, 1991; Sylva et al., 2014). The aforementioned differences clearly indicate that sex specific research with regard to PYD is relevant. The sport domain is an interesting field for this kind of research as a large number of young people also pass a considerable amount of their leisure time in organised extracurricular activities such as sport (Larson & Verma, 1999).

4. THE DEVELOPMENTAL POTENTIAL OF ORGANISED SPORT

To date, researchers recognise that along with family, school, and neighbourhood, organised activities such as sport in which adolescents can take part during their leisure time are important developmental contexts (Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005). In this context, several measurement frameworks have been created to assess PYD through sport, including the 5 C's measurement model (Lerner et al., 2005), the developmental assets framework (Leffert et al., 1998) and the interpersonal domains of learning experiences (Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006). Dworkin, Larson and Hansen's (2003) domains of learning experiences, is the most extensively used framework to assess and evaluate the effects associated with organised participation in sport.

Larson et al. (2006) examined growth experiences in five different organised activities and compared them to average experiences in school, hanging out with friends and having a job. They found that in comparison to other activities, youth in sport reported significantly more experiences related to initiative (i.e., sustaining effort and setting goals, and learning to push oneself), emotional regulation, and teamwork. But these young people also reported significantly more negative experiences involving negative peer interaction, inappropriate adult behaviour and stress. These findings for positive experiences in sport are consistent with previous research (e.g., Dworkin et al., 2003; Hansen et al., 2003) and suggest that, compared to other organised activities, there are distinct learning experiences related to sport participation. According to several researchers, these positive results related to initiative, emotion regulation and teamwork development in sport can easily be understood. Holt and Dunn (2004) suggested, for example, that coaches typically emphasize the importance of hard work and pushing oneself through sport, which could explain why the development of initiative has been associated with organised sport participation. According to Nicholls and colleagues (2005), sport participants may learn to regulate emotions through sport because it is a context in which they must learn to deal with stress in order to be effective performers. Finally, it has also been indicated that learning to work as a team and dealing with challenges related to teamwork, is a central component of many sporting experiences (Holt & Sparkes, 2001). Thus, based on the aforementioned suggestion of Nicholls and colleagues (2005), as well as Holt and Sparkes (2001), one might assume that competitive team sport may be a good context for teaching youth to develop initiative, regulate emotions and learn to work as a team.

exclude young people, who might have other personal goals and needs in terms of sport participation. In relation to disadvantaged youth, it has been suggested that certain young people reject organised, competitive mainstream sports, because such contexts share too many similar components (e.g., formal rules, testing situations) with contexts such as formal educational settings in which they already experienced failure (Andrews & Andrews, 2003; Sugden & Yiannakis, 1982). It is also important to notice that studies relating to young people's involvement in youth activities and sport have found that associations between participation and positive indicators are strongest for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds (Marsch & Kleitman, 2002). Blomfield and Barber (2010), for example, examined the links between developmental experiences, self-conception, and schools' socio-economic status. While the developmental experiences provided to youth in activities, such as sport, were found to positively predict self-worth, social self-conception, and academic self-conception among all youth, these links were much stronger for adolescents from low SES schools. Thus, researchers examining participation among urban, disadvantaged youth suggest that the developmental benefit may equal or exceed the benefits found for affluent samples. Organised sport participation may provide this youth developmental opportunities that they may not otherwise experience to build assets and resources that may foster positive development.

5. THE ACCESSIBILITY AND POPULARITY OF SPORT ACTIVITIES AMONG DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

Sport also appears to be a very accessible activity allowing a large number of young people to become involved. There is recent Flemish data indicating that more than 8 out of 10 youngsters between the age of 15 and 17 are involved in at least one sport (Scheerder, Borgers, & Willem, 2015). Many youth, independently of their socio-economic background, are attracted to sport due to the nature of the activities which include social interaction, competition, fun, challenge, as well as the popularity of these types of organised leisure time activities (Papacharisis, Theofandis, & Danish, 2007; Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Tiffany, 2005; Weiss, Kipp, & Bolter, 2012). There is existing evidence indicating that sports-based practices reach so-called hard-to-reach youth more easily than other sociocultural practices (e.g., youth movements, youth centres, youth out-reach practices) (Crabbé, 2006; Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Nols, 2013). In other words, sport is a powerful tool to engage disadvantaged youth in an organised leisure time context and (as already mentioned in the previous section 4) to foster PYD (Larson, 2000).

Specific types of sports have been found to be popular for disadvantaged youth in particular (Legendijk, 1991; Janssens & van Bottenburg 1999). These relate, on the one hand, to activities with a working or lower class image (e.g., soccer, basketball, urban dance, street sports) and on the other hand, to activities that are associated with the use of explicit physical strength (e.g., martial arts, power-lifting). In addition, Wheaton (2004) argued that youth-oriented activities that embody alternative values such as anti-competitiveness, anti-regulation

sports. The latter type of sports are, in contrast to youth-oriented activities, characterised by structured, interactive activities, with very explicit rules and norms (Theokas, Danish, Hodge, Heke, & Forneris, 2008). Consequently, recognising that specific types of sport are highly accessible for the hard-to reach youth explains why such sport activities are increasingly used by non-sport organisations and services such as youth work organisations that work with these youngsters (Theeboom, Haudenhuyse, & De Knop, 2010). Despite the potential of sport to reach disadvantaged youth and foster PYD, there is evidence indicating that disadvantaged girls are the least likely to participate in organised sport activities and are often overrepresented in a low-engaged sport activity pattern (Lievens & Waeye 2011; Sabo & Veliz, 2008; Scheerder & Vanreusel, 2002).

6. A MARGINALISED GROUP IN THE DOMAIN OF SPORT

Disadvantaged girls are marginalised girls in the domain of organised sport, primarily for two reasons. First, because boys and men still have a higher participation rate in organised sport. There is empirical evidence for the preponderance of girls over boys within the lowest sport participation categories (Lievens & Waeye 2011, Scheerder & Vanresuel, 2002), with the latter also generally being engaged in organised sport for longer periods and more often in competitive contexts (Green, 2010; Talleu, 2011). Girls who are underserved in the domain of sport often have a migrant background, are in low educational tracks (i.e., technical/vocational programmes) and grow up in single parent households (Sabo & Veliz, 2008; Scheerder, Taks, & Lagae, 2007; Smith, Thurston, Green, & Lamb, 2007). Second, sports-based interventions targeting the prevention of, amongst others, crime and delinquency (e.g., Hartmann, 2001) or the improvement of participants' social position (e.g., Buelens, Theeboom, Vertoghen, & De Martelaer, 2015) are primarily targeting boys. This is probably related to the fact that boys who resort to destructive coping strategies more often turn to externalising behaviours such as the use of alcohol or drugs, fighting or reckless behaviour, while girls more often employ internalising coping mechanisms by engaging in, for example, eating disorders (Hellinckx, De Munter, & Grietens, 1991; Junger, Mesman, Meeuw, 2003; Ter Bogt, Van Dorsselaer, & Vollebergh, 2002). Youth that employ externalising coping mechanisms are often regarded as a problem for society and are therefore also often a concern for policy-makers attempting to tackle such societal challenges. Sport is then often used by policy-makers because it has not only the potential to reach these young people, but also because it is regarded as a low-cost tool for advancing a broad range of developmental objectives or for addressing complex societal challenges (United Nations, 2005).

The marginalisation of disadvantaged girls in sport is of further concern as it has been indicated that involvement in organised sport can be very beneficial for these youth (see Barber, Abbott, Neira, & Eccles, 2014). Sex specific research in this domain is also valuable because girls and boys experience sport differently across a number of constructs (e.g., win orientation, parents' belief in their child's sporting abilities, amount of recognition from their fellow team members, coaches, school or community for their athletic accomplishment), which could result in different developmental experiences (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Gould &

generalisations about sport are unhelpful because programmes targeting this youth segment often opt for a limited number of sports such as urban dance and martial arts (Schaillée, Theeboom, & Van Cauwenberg, 2015). Unfortunately, the vast majority of research on the relationship between participation in sport and positive youth development is based on middle-class white samples of youth (Gould, Flett, & Lauer, 2012). Which means that youth living in disadvantaged situations in general and girls in particular are largely understudied in the domain of sport.

7. EVALUATING PROGRAMMES OR COMPONENTS

To understand the developmental potential associated with youth sport it is important to distinguish different types of programmes that exist. One useful way to distinguish different youth sport programmes is Coalter's (2010) classification of 'traditional', 'sport plus' and 'plus sport' programmes. Traditional sport programmes are regular youth sport clubs that may be based on the implicit assumption that mere sport participation can promote PYD. Sport plus programmes involve sports that are adapted and/or augmented to maximise their potential to achieve developmental objectives. And plus sport programmes use sport's popularity as a 'hook' to attract young people to education and training. Coalter (2010) also indicated that there is a continuum of sport plus and plus sport programmes and that the differences between the categories are not always clear-cut. He stated that this lack of clarity is related to the fact that wider outcomes (e.g., increased employability, reduced crime) are pursued via varying mixtures of organisational values, ethics and practices, symbolic games, and more formal didactical approaches. In such circumstances, a clear overview of category characteristics cannot be provided.

In recent years, several sport plus/plus sport programmes have emerged with the goal of using sport as a vehicle or hook for PYD. Examples of such sports-based programmes in the US include, SUPER (Theokas et al., 2008), LIFE Sports (Anderson-Butcher, Riley, Lachini, Wade-Mdivanian, & Davis, 2014), The First Tee (Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter, & Price, 2013), Girls on the Run (Gabriel, De Bate, High, & Racine 2011), Harlem RBI (Berlin, Dworkin, Eames, Menconi, & Perkins, 2007) and Tenacity (Berlin et al., 2007). Some of these programmes were developed in the US and later carried out in other contexts. For example, the First Tee programme was developed in the US and has been carried out to Ireland and New Zealand (Weiss et al., 2013). Other examples are the Girls on the Run programme that was implemented in Canada (Gabriel et al., 2011) and the SUPER programme which was also implemented in Greece (Goudas, Dermitzaki, Leondari, & Danish, 2006). Examples of PYD programmes in Europe include, Short to the ball (Belgium) (Buelens et al., 2015), Boxing Upward (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Coalter, 2012), IPSY (Germany), Fit and Strong for Life (Germany, Austria, Denmark and Luxembourg), Growing Up (Germany), Portfolio (Spain) and Zippy's Friends (Norway, Lithuania, Poland, Denmark) (Busiol, Shek, & Lee, 2015).

It is interesting to note that studies focusing on such sports-based developmental programmes for disadvantaged youth (e.g., Haudenhuyse, 2012, Buelens et al., 2015) usually make use of a single case-study approach. Such a research approach develops, for instance,

youth, delivers their program. But such a research approach does not allow us to examine similarities and contrasts among different programmes. We have noticed that, to date, there are hardly any studies that evaluate and compare different implementations of sports-based programmes for disadvantaged youth (for an exception focusing on prevention programmes for boys see Kim, 2007). In order to describe if and why some programmes could be more successful than others in terms of fostering PYD there is a need for more explorative research that use a multiple case study approach.

In addition, it has been argued that many sport plus programmes are guided by inflated promises and a lack of clarity (Coalter, 2010). It is often not clear why it is assumed that participation in particular programmes can have certain impacts on participants' personal and social development (Coalter, 2011). Coalter (2007) also mentioned that the added value of sports-based social interventions are often formulated in imprecise terms, which reduces the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of such programmes. According to Hansen, Larson and Dworkin (2003), existing evaluation practices, in relation to youth programmes, have done little to differentiate what processes or experiences with organised youth activities are related to participants' personal and social development. The aforementioned unclarity has led researchers to refer to such practices as 'black' or 'magical' boxes (see Coalter, 2007), implying that researchers often concentrate on the outcomes of a programme without analysing the actual programme's content and processes.

As a result, little is known about the ways programmes are actually working in relation to their often hard-to-follow outcomes (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Nols, 2012). This narrow focus on the 'magical' contribution of sport has also led to limited insights into how to best support and improve sports-based programmes targeting disadvantaged girls. Coalter (2013) argued, with reference to Pawson (2006), that a shift from families of programmes (e.g., sport plus programmes) to families of mechanisms (e.g., diversion, deterrence and pro-social development) is fundamental. He furthermore suggested that because of such a shift in approach, we can discover that different programmes share common components. It has also been stated that evaluations on the level of programme components, instead of on the totality of programmes, will create less defensive and unreceptive attitudes towards evaluators in the field because programmes as a whole cannot be labelled as good or bad (Weiss, 1998).

8. NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT CONDITIONS

It has been indicated that programme level components can be divided in necessary and sufficient conditions (Coalter, 2007b with reference to Patriksson, 1995; Svoboda, 1994). The former can be described as basic conditions that are needed to allow other things to occur. For example, participation in sport is necessary to allow developmental opportunities through sport (Coalter, 2013). Consequently, it is very likely that the low level of regular involvement in organised sport among disadvantaged girls in general demands for specific strategies to overcome existing sport participation barriers including a number of practical (e.g., lack of money), intrapersonal (e.g., body image dissatisfaction), interpersonal (e.g., peer teasing), as

the competitive and exclusive characteristic of club sport) (Caisey, Eime, Payne, & Harvey, 2009). However, it has been indicated that merely taking into account the aforementioned barriers in order to increase regular involvement in sport will not suffice to expect that participants can actually benefit developmentally from their participation in sport (e.g., Coakley 2011; Haudenhuyse 2012).

Therefore, the second type of conditions (labelled as sufficient) refers to those components that are considered to be essential for maximizing developmental outcomes. Programme components of organised activity programmes that have been linked to PYD in previous research are: (1) safe and health-promoting facilities, (2) clear and consistent rules and expectations, (3) warm, supportive relationships, (4) opportunities for meaningful inclusion and belonging, (5) positive social norms, (6) support for efficacy and autonomy, (7) opportunities for skill-building and (8) coordination among family, school, and community efforts (Larson, Eccles, & Gootman, 2004). According to Haudenhuyse (2012), the aforementioned components represent the state of the art thinking about what might make organised activities an effective context for PYD, but have not been empirically analysed to date within sport programmes for disadvantaged youth. He argued that we still have to comprehend how such components would shape the way sport programmes for disadvantaged youth need to organise their activities, in order to facilitate access, prevent drop-out and generate an added value for those involved. What the aforementioned components reflect, is the fact that developmental benefits of sport are contingent on social-contextual factors that are largely based on how peers, coaches, officials and administrators contribute to the ways in which sport is delivered and experienced (Holt, 2008; Petitpas et al., 2005; Weiss & Bjornstal, 2009). In addition to the aforementioned eight features (e.g., safe and health-promoting facilities), researchers recognise that there are other components of a youth (sport) programme related to the organisation or staff that may be critical for developmental processes (Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015).

To date, the majority of the sport-related youth studies in the PYD domain have focused on the impact of coaches. For example, research related to coaching behaviour (Gould & Carson, 2011), motivational climate and caring climate (Gould et al., 2012). Although it has often been indicated that peers in organised activities (including sport) can be a positive source of influence for youth development compared to other sources (such as coaches and parents), their position has received only moderate attention from researchers (Denault & Poulin, 2007; Holt & Jones, 2008; Holt & Sehn, 2008). Other factors that are particularly relevant for investigation are the ones that can be controlled or regulated by the coaching staff or management staff of a programme such as (a) staff education, (b) group size, (c) staff to child ratio, (d) group composition, (e) social psychological climate, (f) activity features (Coalter, 2012; Haudenhuyse, 2012; Vandell et al., 2015; Weiss, 1998). All these components have been hypothesised to be important to programme quality, and for some of these factors, such as the group size, there is empirical evidence indicating that this factor has an impact on the social interactions between peers and coaches, which may consequently

(Haudenhuyse, 2012).

In addition, it is important to note that both type of conditions - necessary and sufficient - can be studied across different programmes, irrespective of their ascribed typology (e.g., sport plus or plus sport), category (e.g., traditional or alternative) or sector (e.g., sport versus youth welfare). Thus, in order to understand the underlying processes leading to developmental outcomes, we need to deconstruct sport programmes and evaluate at the level of programme components instead of at the general programme level. Coalter (2012) argued that for sports-based programmes it would be more beneficial that evaluations focus on the influence of programme components because such an approach will contribute in creating better and more effective sports-based interventions.

9. THE FLEMISH SPORTS LANDSCAPE

In Flanders there are two sectors that organise sport programmes for disadvantaged youth in general, and girls in particular, but only reach a limited number of these young people. These relate in particular to sport programmes of the (a) organised sport sector (i.e., sport clubs and federations) and (b) the formal education sector. The organised sport sector has been regarded as the primary actor in the Flemish sport for all policy. Flemish sport policy-makers have, therefore, implemented a number of structural measures (e.g., implementation of specific decrees on local sports policy and participation) and specific campaigns (e.g., to increase ethnic minorities in sports clubs) to sensitise the organised sport sector to be more accessible for socially vulnerable groups (Theeboom, Haudenhuyse, & De Knop, 2010). However, there is existing evidence indicating that the number of sport clubs in Flanders that specifically target or reach disadvantaged youth still remains very limited (Haudenhuyse, Nols, Theeboom, & Coussée, 2014; Roggeman, Smits, Spruyt, & Van Droogenbroeck, 2013). It has furthermore been indicated that the few sport clubs that actually succeed in attracting disadvantaged youth are often in need of specific support (e.g., more knowledge about working with this youth as well as about youth developmental strategies) (Haudenhuyse et al., 2014). In addition, they argued that the reluctance of the majority of the clubs to target disadvantaged youth is most likely caused by the fact that many of them face a multitude of problems which they consider as more important (e.g., financial and infrastructural shortage, a lack of qualified sport coaches). The Flemish formal education sector has taken an interest in the use of sport for reaching youngsters that are not actively involved in regular sport clubs or community sport programmes (De Meester, Aelterman, Cardon, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Haerens, 2014). Collaborations between schools and various leisure organisations (e.g., youth work, arts, sport clubs) have resulted in the so-called extended schools (Brede School) or Sport-after-School programmes. The idea of extended schools is not only to improve the accessibility of organised leisure activities (including sports) for disadvantaged youth but also to provide these youngsters with an additional social context in which learning experiences can be fostered (Ernalsteen & Joos, 2011). However, with regard to Flanders it has been indicated that Sport-after-School programmes insufficiently reach young people from less

Sports-based programmes in Flanders where disadvantaged young people in general and disadvantaged girls in particular have been reached in greater numbers are mainly organised by the youth welfare sector and local governments. Within the youth welfare sector there are various organisations that have started to make use of sport as a means for fostering personal and social development, building social capital and improving the well-being of specific groups of young people (Theeboom et al., 2010). Since the nineties, also local governments (i.e., cities and larger municipalities) became more active in using sport as a social tool for reaching youth in disadvantaged situations (Haudenhuyse, 2012). This resulted in so-called community or 'neighbourhood sport' activities, characterised by a flexible organisation in which several local structures cooperate with the intention to provide highly accessible sport activities. Cities and larger municipalities have started to use their community sport programmes with the intention to foster social integration in sport among specific (mostly underserved) target groups (Haudenhuyse & Theeboom, 2015).

To date there is, however, no empirical evidence indicating that sports-based programmes organised by the aforementioned sectors produce positive developmental outcomes for its participants. For example, the Flemish Government supports Sport-after-School programmes because empirical evidence indicates that in addition to the involvement in physical activities or sport, participation in such programmes have been related to various physical (e.g., improved physical fitness), personal (e.g., improved self-esteem), as well as academic (training and obtained certificates/diplomas) and occupational (career, future prospects and job autonomy) outcomes in later life (e.g., Ara et al., 2006, Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Broh, 2002). But in the context of academic achievement, for example, it has been indicated that students who select themselves into organised activities, such as sport, may have higher academic achievement prior to participation compared to non-participants (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005). In other words, abovementioned positive academic-related outcomes of Sport-after-School programmes may be related to self-selection instead of being a result from participation. Taken together, it seems that some sectors more easily reach hard-to-reach youth, such as disadvantaged girls, but also that sport is used for various purposes without knowing if participation in organised sport in a recreational context can actually serve as a means for PYD.

10. AIMS OF THE PHD

In this general introduction, reference was made to the black box approach in which the outcomes (e.g., developmental experiences) of a sports-based programme are measured, while little is known about the specific context of the programme. There is a lack of research examining the underlying conditions and mechanisms fostering positive youth development in sports-based programmes aimed at targeting disadvantaged girls. As indicated in the literature, several programme components might be influential during these processes. In order to obtain more insight into the black box of programmes targeting disadvantaged girls, it is relevant to examine these components. Therefore, the aim of this PhD study is to explore

effectiveness of sport programmes targeting disadvantaged girls.

Thus, instead of focusing on families of programmes (e.g., sport plus programmes vs. plus sport programmes) we have chosen to examine the role of programme components that are largely based on how peers, members of the coaching staff (i.e., coaches and youth welfare workers), the organisation of a programme and the inherent characteristics of the activity contribute to the ways in which sport is delivered and experienced. With this research we also aim to increase our understanding with regard to the implementation of sports-based programmes for disadvantaged girls by using a multiple case-study approach. In this context, the research sought to identify what happened and develop an understanding of process - the how and why - and the reasons for inter-programme differences, in order to consider issues of good practice.

As already mentioned, we focused on disadvantaged girls because of several reasons. First of all, we have indicated that they are a marginalised group in the domain of sport, which is of particular concern because involvement in organised sport can be beneficial for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition, we have mentioned that sex differences have an impact on how young people experience a number of constructs which could result in different developmental experiences among boys and girls. Another, although somewhat perhaps less crucial, aspect that also contributed to our motivation to focus on girls related to the fact that sex issues have an impact on the research process. Sex differences between the researcher and the researched play an important role in conducting as it may influence perceptions of the participants (Järviluoma, Moisala, & Vilkkö, 2003; Pini, 2005). It has been indicated that a shared sex identity will help the researcher to obtain trust and more accurate information from female participants (Kosygina, 2005). Thus, sharing the same sex identity with the youth involved in this study would probably allow the researcher to obtain rich data from her participants.

The preliminary findings of this study were presented and discussed at several national and international scientific conferences (see Appendix A. List of publications and presentations). This provided us the opportunity to establish an international network of researchers, which resulted in a collaboration for a qualitative paper regarding Flemish initiatives targeting disadvantaged youth with Prof. Dr. Eivind Skille who works at Hedmark University College in Elverum, Norway. Finally, the several stages that were passed through this PhD have resulted in various contributions of which one is published at present and two others are under review in scientific journals with an international referee system. Two other contributions are published in scientific monographs with a national referee system. Furthermore, this PhD study resulted in one specialist article and one vulgarizing publication aimed at a wider audience.

11. BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE PHD STUDY

The central research question of this PhD study can be formulated as follows: 'How can sport programmes effectively foster positive youth development (PYD) among disadvantaged girls?'

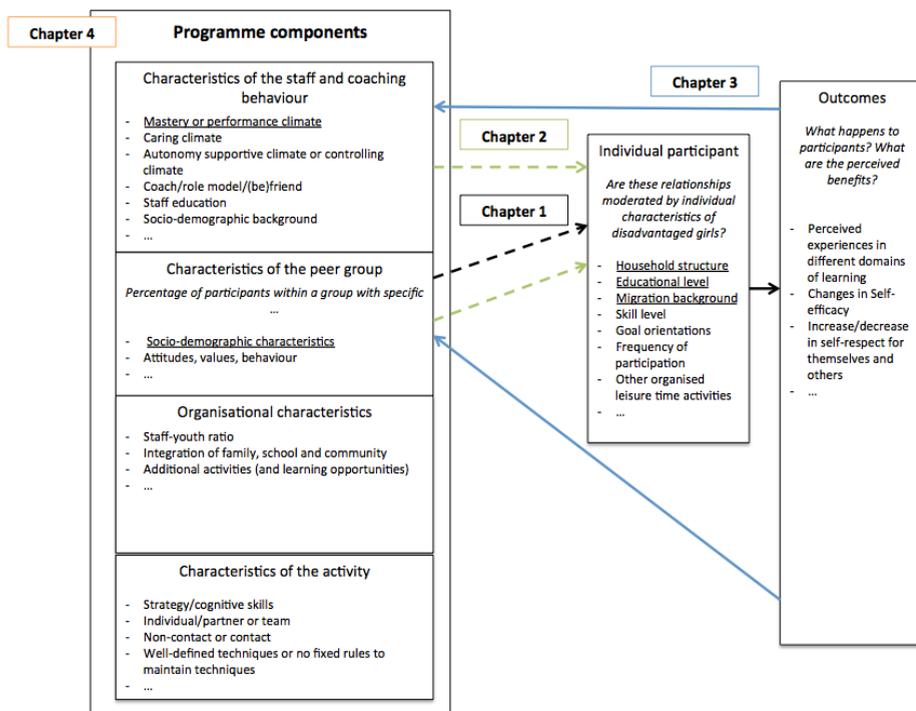


Figure 1. Representation of the four separate studies in this PhD

In **chapter 1**, we examine the relationship between peer group composition in sport programmes and positive youth development (PYD) in disadvantaged girls, as well as determine whether this relationship was moderated by participants' personal characteristics. Two hundred young women aged between 10 and 24 involved in martial arts or urban dance programmes completed a questionnaire including the 'Youth Experience Survey for Sport' (YES-S) (MacDonald, Côté, Eys, & Deakin, 2012) and questions regarding participants' socio-economic characteristics (i.e., migration background, education level, household structure). Multilevel regression analyses were performed using MLwiN 2.30 to take into account the hierarchical data structure. The findings related to the reported positive and negative developmental experiences are presented and the extent to which positive youth development is linked to the group composition is discussed.

In **chapter 2**, we examine the relationships between young female sport participants reported developmental gains and perceptions of a coach- and peer-created climate, and determine whether these relationships were moderated by personal characteristics. Two hundred young females aged between 10 and 24 living in Flanders completed a questionnaire including the 'Youth Experience Survey for Sport' (YES-S; MacDonald et al., 2012), the

Peer Motivational Climate in Youth Sport Questionnaire' (PeerMVCYSQ; Ntoumanis & Vazou, 2005) and questions regarding participants' socio-economic characteristics (i.e., migration background, education, family situation). Multilevel regression analyses were performed using MLwiN 2.30 to take into account the hierarchical data structure. In this chapter we discuss if there is a relationship between positive youth development and perceptions of a coach- and peer-created climate. We also describe the extent to which the coach- and peer-created climates determine participants' positive and negative experiences in sport.

The aim of **chapter 3** is to gain more insight into different social mechanisms (i.e., the result of specific attitudes, values or behaviours among peers and adults) leading to perceived developmental outcomes, because existing research related to the influence of the social psychological climate has been focusing merely on sport participants' perceptions of the motivational climate (Smith et al., 2008) and caring climate (Newton et al., 2007). For this, three Flemish urban-dance based programmes were selected in which data were collected by means of in-depth interviews and observations with female participants who have a disadvantaged background (N=25). In this chapter we describe the role of the (a) motivational climate and (b) caring climate, but also indicate how (c) the autonomy supportive style of coaching and (d) observational learning can have a positive impact on one's personal and social development.

The aim of **chapter 4** is to increase our understanding regarding the implementation of sports-based developmental programmes for disadvantaged youth. Therefore, this study evaluates and compares different implementations of sports-based developmental programmes for disadvantaged youth. By using a multiple case study approach we evaluate and compare six sports-based developmental programmes. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with coaches and other key stakeholders (e.g., welfare workers) (N = 14). We describe several common elements and distinguishing features of the sports-based developmental programmes scrutinised here.

Finally, in the last chapter we highlight the encountered challenges, provide an overview of the major results of this PhD thesis, present the underlying research paradigms, discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the study and mention the strengths, limitations and potential further research pathways.

12. REFERENCES

- Anderson-Butcher, D., Riley, A., Lachini, A., & Wade-Mdivanian, R. (2014). Maximizing youth experiences in community sport settings: The design and impact of the LiFE Sports Camp. *Journal of Sport Management*, 28(2), 236-249.
- Andrews, J., & Andrews, G. (2003). Life in a secure unit: the rehabilitation of young people through the use of sport. *Social science and medicine*, 56(3), 531-550.
- Ara, I., Vicente-Rodriguez, G., Perez-Gomez, J., Jimenez-Ramirez, J., Serrano- Sanchez, J. A., Dorado, C. et al. (2006). Influence of extracurricular sport activities on body composition and physical fitness in boys: a 3-year longitudinal study. *International Journal of Obesity*, 30, 1062-1071.

- Positive Youth Development. In M. J. Furlong, R. Gilman, & E. S. Huebner (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology in schools* (pp. 227-244), New York: Routledge.
- Barber, B. L., Eccles, J. S., & Stone, M. R. (2001). Whatever happened to the Jock, the brain, and the princess? Young adult pathways linked to adolescent activity involvement and social identity. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 16*, 429-455.
- Bendit, R., & Stokes, D. (2003). 'Disadvantage': transition policies between social construction and the needs of vulnerable youth. In A. López Blasco, W. McNeish, & A. Walther (Eds.), *Young people and contradictions of inclusion: towards Integrated Transition Policies in Europe* (pp. 261–283). Bristol: Policy Press.
- Benson, P., Scales, P., Hamilton, S., & Sema, A. (2006). Positive Youth Development: Theory, research, and applications. In R. Lerner (Ed.). *Handbook of Child Psychology* (6th ed.), Vol 1: *Theoretical Models of Human Development* (pp.894-941). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Berlin, R., Dworkin, A., Eames, N., Menconi, A., & Perkins, D. (2007). Examples of sports-based youth development programs. *New directions for Youth Development, 115*, 85-106.
- Blomfield, C., & Barber, B. L. (2010). Australian adolescent's extracurricular activity participation and positive development: Is the relationship mediated by peers? *Australian Journal of Educational Developmental Psychology, 10*, 108-122.
- Broh, B. (2002). Linking extracurricular programming to academic achievement: Who benefits and why? *Sociology of Education, 75*, 69-95.
- Buelens, E., Theeboom, M., Vertonghen, J., & De Martelaer K. (2015). Socially Vulnerable youth and Volunteering in Sports: Analyzing a Brussels Training Program for Young Soccer Coaches. *Social Inclusion, 3*(3), 82-97.
- Busiol, D., Shek, D., & Lee, T. (2015). A review of adolescent prevention and positive youth development programs in non-English speaking European countries. *International Journal of Disability and Human Development, 1*-10. DOI: 10.1515/ijdhhd-2015-0025
- Butts, J., Bazemore, G., & Meroe, A. (2010). *Positive Youth Justice: Framing Justice Interventions using the concepts of Positive Youth Development*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice.
- Caisey, M., Eime, R., Payne, W., & Harvey, J. (2009). Using a socioecological approach to examine participation in sport and physical activity among rural adolescent girls. *Qualitative Health Research, 19*(7):, 881-893. doi: 10.1177/1049732309338198.
- Coakley, J. (2011). Youth sports: What counts as "Positive development"? *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 35*, 306-324.
- Coalter, F. (2006). *A monitoring and Evaluation Manual*. Sterling University and UK Sport, Stirling.
- Coalter, F. (2007). *A Wider Social Role for Sport. Who's keeping the score?* Routledge, London.
- Coalter, F. (2010). The Politics of sport-for-development: Limited focus programmes and broad gauge problems? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 45*(3), 295-314.

- relationship between politics and evidence. In B. Houlihan, M. Green (Eds.). *Handbook of Sport Development*. Abingdon: Routledge – Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- Coalter, F. (2013). *Sport for development: what game are we playing?* Abingdon: Routledge.
- Crabbé, T. (2006). *Knowing the Score – Positive Futures case study research: Final report*. Home Office UK.
- De Meester, A., Aelterman, N., Cardon, G., De Bourdeaudhuij, I., & Haerens, L. (2014). Extracurricular school-based sports as a motivating vehicle for sports participation in youth: a cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 11(48). doi:10.1186/1479-5868-11-48
- De Meester, A., Cardon, G., De Bourdeaudhuij, I., & Haerens, L. (2015). Is adolescents' extracurricular school-based sports participation related to community sports participation, physical activity and motivation towards sports? *Submitted to Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*.
- Denault, A-S., & Poulin, F. (2007). Sports as peer socialization contexts. *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 31(52), 5-7.
- Dworkin, J. B., Larson, R., & Hansen, D. (2003). Adolescents' accounts of growth experiences in youth activities. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32, 17-26.
- Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. A. (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development/Committee on community-level programs for youth*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- Ernalsteen, V. & Joos, A. (2011). *Wat doet een Brede School? Werken aan een brede leer- en leefomgeving*. Gent: Steunpunt Diversiteit & Leren.
- Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2005). Extracurricular involvement and adolescent adjustment: Impact of duration, number of activities, and breadth of participation. *Applied Developmental Science*, 10(3), 132-146.
- Gabriel, K., De Bate, R., High, R., & Racine, E. (2011). Girls on the run: A quasi- experimental evaluation of a developmentally focused youth sport program. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 8(2), 285-294.
- Goudas, M., Dermitzaki, I., Leondari, A., & Danish, S. (2006). The effectiveness of teaching a life skills program in a physical education context. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 21, 429-438.
- Gould, D., & Carson, S. (2011). Young athletes' perceptions of the relationship between coaching behaviors and developmental experiences. *International Journal of Coaching Science*, 5(2), 3-29.
- Gould, D., Flett, R., & Lauer, L. (2012). The relationship between psychosocial developmental and the sports climate experienced by underserved youth. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 13, 80-87.
- Green, K. (2010). *Key Themes in Youth Sport*. London: Routledge.

- activities: a survey of self-reported developmental experiences. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 13(1), 25-55.
- Hartmann, D. (2001). Notes on Midnight Basketball and the Cultural Politics of Recreation, Race and At-Risk Youth. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 25(4), 339-371.
- Haudenhuyse, R. (2012). *The Potential of Sports for Socially Vulnerable Youth* (Doctoral dissertation). VUBPress: Brussel.
- Haudenhuyse, R., & Theeboom, M. (2015). Buurtsport en sociale innovatie: een tweede start voor buurtsport in Vlaanderen? In M. Theeboom, R., Haudenhuyse, & J. Vertonghen (Eds.). *Sport en sociale innovatie. Inspirerende praktijken en inzichten* (pp. 91-108). VUBPress: Brussel.
- Haudenhuyse, R., Theeboom, M., & Coalter, F. (2012). The potential of sports-based social interventions for vulnerable youth: implications for sport coaches and youth workers. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15(4), 437-454.
- Haudenhuyse, R., Theeboom, M., & Nols, Z. (2012). Sports-based interventions for socially vulnerable youth: Towards well-defined interventions with easy-to-follow outcomes? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 0(0), 1-14.
- Haudenhuyse, R., Theeboom, M., Nols, Z., & Coussée, F. (2014). Socially vulnerable young people in Flemish sports clubs: Investigating youth experiences. *European Physical Education Review*, 20(2), 179-198.
- Hellinckx, W., De Munter, A., & Grietens, H. (1991). Gedrags- en emotionele problemen bij kinderen. Deel I. Leuven/Apeldoorn: Garant.
- Holt, N. L. (2008). *Positive youth development through sport*. New York, USA: Routledge.
- Holt, N., & Dunn, J. (2004). Toward a grounded theory of the psychosocial competencies and environmental conditions associated with soccer success. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 16, 199-219.
- Holt, N. L., & Jones, M. I. (2008). Future directions for positive youth development and sport research. In N. L. Holt (Ed.), *Positive youth development through sport* (pp. 122-132). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Holt, N. L., & Sehn, Z. L. (2008). Processes associated with positive youth development and participation in competitive youth sport. In N. L. Holt (Ed.), *Positive Youth Development Through Sport* (pp. 9-23). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Holt, N. & Sparkes, A. (2001). 'An ethnographic study of cohesiveness on a college soccer team over a season', *The Sport Psychologist*, 15, 237-259.
- Järviluoma, H., Moisala, P., & Vilkkko, A. (2003). *Gender and Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage.
- Jacobs, J. (1991). The influence of gender stereotypes on parent and child math attitudes: Differences across grade-levels. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83, 518-527.
- Janssens, J., & van Bottenburg, M. (1999). *Etnische tweedeling in de sport*. Arnhem: NOC*NSF.

- Prevalentie, risicofactoren en preventie. Den Haag: Van Gorcum.
- Kim, N. (2007). *Program Theory of Sport-Related Intervention: A Multiple Case Study of Sport-Related Youth Violence Prevention Programs* (Doctoral dissertation). The University of Texas: Austin.
- King, P., Carr, D., & Boitor, C. (2011). Religion, spirituality, positive youth development, and thriving. In R. Lerner, J. Lerner, & J. Benson, (Eds.). *Positive Youth development. Advances in Child Development and Behavior* (vol. 41, pp. 159-193). London, Engalnd: Elsevier.
- Kosygina, L. (2005). Doing Gender in Research: Reflection on Experience in Field. *The Qualitative Report*, 10(1), 87-95.
- Legendijk, E. (1991). De zwarte band van etnische minderheden. Over kleur, macht en kracht van lichaamscultuur. *Vrijetijd en Samenleving*, 9(2), 45-62.
- Larson, R. W. (2000). Toward a psychology of positive youth development. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 170–183.
- Larson, R., Eccles, J., & Gootman, A. (2004). Features of positive developmental settings. *The Prevention Researcher*, 11(2), 8-13.
- Larson, R. W., Hansen, D. M., & Moneta, G. (2006). Differing profiles of developmental experiences across types of organized youth activities. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(5), 849-863.
- Leffert, N., Benson, P., Scales, P., Sharma, A., Drake, D., & Blyth, D. (1998). Developmental assets: Measurement and prediction of risk behaviors among adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science*, 2, 209-230.
- Lerner, R. (2005). Promoting positive youth development: Theoretical and empirical bases. *National Research Council / Institute of Medicine*. Wahsington, DC: National Academies of Science.
- Lerner J., Phelps, E., Forman, Y., & Bowers, E. (2009). Positive youth development. In R. Lerner & SL. Steinberg (Eds.). *Handbook of adolscnt psychology. Individual bases of adolescent development* (3rd ed., vol. 1, pp. 524-558). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Lerner, R. (2009). The positive youth development perspective: Theoretical and empirical bases of a strength based approach to adolescent development. In C. Snyder & S. Lopez (Eds.). *Oxford Handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 149-163). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Lerner, R., Lerner, J., Amerigi, J., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., & Gestdottir, S. (2005). Positive Youth Development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents: Findings from the first wave of the 4-H study of positive youth development. *Journal of Early Adolesecence*, 25, 17-71.
- Lerner, R., Lerner, J., Bowers, E., & Geldhof, G. (2015). Positive youth development: A relational developmental systems model. In W.F. Overton & P.C. Molenaar (Eds.). *Theory and Method*. Volume 1 of the *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science* (7th ed.). (pp. 607-651). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

- positive youth development among American adolescents. *Development and Psychopathology*, 22(4), 759–770.
- Lievens, J., & Waeye, H. (2011). *Participatie in Vlaanderen. Basisgegevens van de Participatiesurvey 2009*. Leuven: acco academic.
- Long, J., & Sanderson, I. (2001). The Social Benefits of Sport: Where's the proof? In C. Gratton & I. P. Henry (Eds.), *Sport in the City: The Role of Sport in Economic and Social Regeneration* (pp. 187-203). London: Routledge.
- MacDonald, D., Côté, J., Eys, M., & Deakin, J. (2012). Psychometric properties of the youth experience survey with young athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 13, 332-340.
- Maton, K., Dodgen, D., Leadbeater, B., Sandler, I., Schellenbach, C., & Solarz, A. (2004). Strengths-based research and policy: An introduction. In K. Maton, C. Schellenbach, B. Leadbeater, & A. Solarz (Eds.), *Investing in children, youth, families, and communities: Strengths-based research and policy* (pp. 3-12). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Mahoney, J., Larson, R., Eccles, J., & Lord, H. (2005). Organized activities as developmental contexts for children and adolescents. In J. Mahoney, R. Larson & J. Eccles (Eds.), *Organized activities as contexts of development* (pp. 3-22). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Martinek, T. (1997). Serving Underserved Youth Through Physical Activity. *Quest*, 49(1), 3-7.
- Marsch, H., & Kleitman, S. (2002). Extracurricular school activities: The good, the bad, and the nonlinear. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(4), 464-514.
- Masten, A (1997). Resilience in Children at-Risk. *Research/Practice*, 5(1), 1-6.
- Newton, M., Fry, M., Watson, D., Gano-Overway, L., Kim, M. S., Magyar, M., & Guivernau, M. (2007). Psychometric properties of the Caring Climate Scale in a physical activity setting. *Revista de Psicología del Deporte*, 16, 67-84.
- Nicholls, A., Holt, N., & Polman, R. (2005). 'A phenomenological analysis of coping effectiveness in golf', *The Sport Psychologist*, 19, 111-130.
- Ntoumanis, N., & Vazou, S. (2005). Peer motivational climate in youth sport: Measurement development. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 27, 432-455.
- Papacharisis, V., Theofandis, G., & Danish, S. (2007). Education through the physical: The effectiveness of teaching life skills in physical education. In L. Chang (Ed.). *Motivation of Exercise and Physical Activity*. (pp., 67-77) Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.
- Petitpas, A., Cornelius, A., Van Raalte, J., & Tiffany J. (2005). A framework for planning youth sport programs that foster psychosocial development. *The Sport Psychologist*, 19, 63-80.
- Pini, B. (2005) 'Interviewing men: Gender and the collection and interpretation of qualitative data', *Journal of Sociology*, 41(2), 201-216.
- Roggemans, L., Smits, W., Spruyt, B., & Van Droogenbroek, F. (2013). *Sociaal bekabeld of in vrije val: Sociale participatie door kansengroepen in Vlaanderen*. Vrije Universiteit Brussel & JeugdOnderzoeksPlatform: Brussel.

- Schaillée, H., Theeboom, M., & Van Cauwenberg, J. (2015). What Makes a Difference for Disadvantaged Girls? Investigating the Interplay between Group Composition and Positive Youth Development in Sport. *Social Inclusion, 3*(3), 51-66.
- Scheerder, J., Borgers, J., & Willem, A. (2015). Sportdeelname in Vlaanderen. Trends en profielen. In J. Lievens, J., Siongers, & H. Waeghe (Eds.). *Participatie in Vlaanderen: Basisgegevens van de Participatiesurvey*. (pp. 209-250) Leuven: Acco.
- Scheerder, J., Taks, M., & Lagae, W. (2007). Teenage girls' participation in sports. An intergenerational analysis of socio-cultural predictor variables. *European Journal for Sport and Society, 4*(2), 133-150.
- Scheerder, J., & Vanreusel, B. (2002). *Actieve sportbeoefening in Vlaanderen. Technisch verslag van de SBV'99 met enkele cijferreeksen*. Leuven: Acco.
- Smerdon, B. (2002). Students' perceptions of membership in their high schools. *Sociology of Education, 75*(4), 287-305.
- Smith, R. E., Cumming, S. P., & Smoll, F. L. (2008). Development and validation of the Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 20*, 116-136.
- Smith, A., Thurston, M., Green, K., & Lamb, K. (2007). Young people's participation in extracurricular physical education: A study of 15–16 year olds in North-West England and North-East Wales. *European Physical Education Review, 13*(3), 339-368.
- Steer, R. (2000). *A Background to Youth Disaffection: A Review of Literature and Evaluation Findings from Work with Young People*. London: Community Development Foundation.
- Sugden, J., & Yiannakis, A. (1982). Sport and Juvenile Delinquency: a Theoretical Base. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 6*(1), 22-30.
- Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj, I. & Taggart, B. (2014) The Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education Project (EPPSE 3-16+) Students' educational outcomes at age 16. Department for Education.
- Talleu, C. (2011). *Gender equality in sports: Access for girls and women to sport practices*. Council of Europe. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/epas/publications/Handbook_2%20_Gender_equality_in_sport.Pdf
- Ter Bogt, T., van Dorsselaer, S., & Vollebergh, W. (2002). *HBSC. Psychische gezondheid, risicogedrag en welbevinden van Nederlandse scholieren*. Trimbos-instituut: Utrecht.
- Theeboom, M., Haudenhuyse, R., & De Knop, P. (2010). Community sports development for socially deprived groups: a wider role for the commercial sports sector? A look at the Flemish situation. *Sport in Society, 13*(9), 1395-1413.
- Theokas, C., Almerigi, J., Lerner, R., Dowling, E., Benson, P., Scales, P., & von Eye, A. (2005). Conceptualizing and modeling individual and ecological asset components of thriving in early adolescence. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 25*(1), 113-143.

- through sport for children and youth. In N. Holt (Ed.), *Positive youth development through sport* (Vol. 6, pp. 71-81). London: Routledge.
- Theokas, C., & Lerner, R. (2006). Observed Ecological Assets in Families, Schools, and Neighborhoods: Conceptualization, Measurement and Relations with Positive and Negative Developmental Outcomes. *Applied Developmental Science, 10*(2), 61-74.
- United Nations (2005). *World youth report 2005: Young people today and in 2015*. United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- Vandell, D. L., Larson, R., Mahoney, J., & Watts, T. (2015). Organized activities. In R. Lerner (Series Ed.) and M. H. Bornstein & T. Leventhal (Volume Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science* (7th ed.): Vol. 4. *Ecological settings and processes in developmental systems*. New York: Wiley Interscience.
- Van Houtte, M., & Van Maele, D. (2012). School is cool: the importance of faculty trust for student's social integration in technical/vocational versus academic schools. *Kultura i Edukacja, 5*(91), 103-127.
- Vettenburg, N., & Walgrave, L. (2009). Maatschappelijke kwetsbaarheid op school [Social vulnerability at school]. *Welwijs, 20*(3), 3-8.
- Weiss, C. H. (1998). *Evaluation: Methods for studying programs and policies* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Weiss, M., & Wiese-Bjornstal, D. (2009). Promoting positive youth development through physical activity. *President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Research Digest, 10*, 1-8.
- Weiss, M., Kipp, L., & Bolter, N. (2012). Training for life: Optimizing positive youth development through sport and physical activity. In S.M. Murphy (Ed.). *The Oxford handbook of sport and performance psychology* (pp. 448-475). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Weiss, M., Stuntz, C., Bhalla, J., Bolter, N., & Price, M. (2013). More than a game: Impact of the first tee life skills programme on positive youth development. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 5*(2), 214-244.
- Wheaton, B. (2004). *Understanding Lifestyle Sport: Consumption, Identity and Difference*. London: Routledge.
- Youth Justice Board (2005). *Risk and Protective Factors*. Youth Justice Board for England and Wales: London.
- Youngblade, L., Theokas, C., Schulenberg, J., Curry, L., Huan, I., & Novak, M. (2007). Risk and Promotive Factors in Families, Schools, and Communities: A contextual Model of Positive Youth Development in Adolescence. *Pediatrics, 119*(1), 47-53.

Introduction of the first chapter

To date, there is a broad consensus among researchers that the sport context largely determines if young people derive developmental benefits from their participation in sport (e.g., Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2013). There is empirical evidence indicating that specific features (e.g., positive social norms) of organised activity programmes are related to participants' personal and social developmental outcomes (Larson, Eccles, & Gootman, 2004). However, researchers have also recognised that other factors of a youth (sport) programme may be critical for developmental processes (Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015). Weiss (1998) stated that the group composition of the peer group is one of these factors. It is crucial to explore the role of the group composition in adolescents given the fact that in particular the younger ones are very susceptible to peer influence as a result of their psychosocial immaturity (Sumter, Bokhorst, Steinberg, & Westenberg, 2009). However, studies that focus on the role of the peer groups examined the quality of friendships in sport (e.g., Weiss, Smith, & Theeboom, 1996) and the role of specific group processes (e.g., Bruner et al., 2014). But there are hardly any studies that explore the role of participants' characteristics (for an exception see Denault & Poulin, 2007), although it has been stated that individual characteristics of participants shape the environment that mediates the programme for each participant (Weiss, 1998). Next to the participants' age and gender explored in Denault and Poulin's study (2007) there are other characteristics such as family structures (Peskins, 1967), ethnicity and education level (Rivera, Soderstrom, & Uzzi, 2010) which could explain why youth may have different outcomes depending on which group they were in. By exploring the role of the group composition, which is one programme component, we also seek to help practitioners and policy-makers that have to regulate or evaluate sports-based programmes in the context of funding. Finally, it is important to mention that we focused on disadvantaged girls because the sport participation levels among this youth segment are very low (e.g., Sabo & Veliz, 2008), which is of further concern as it has been indicated that that involvement in organised sport can be particularly beneficial for these young people (Barber, Abbott, Neira, & Eccles, 2014).

What Makes a Difference for Disadvantaged Girls? Investigating the Interplay between Group Composition and Positive Youth Development in Sport

Hebe Schaillée¹, Marc Theeboom¹ and Jelle Van Cauwenberg^{2,3,4}

This chapter is integrally published as a paper: Schaillée, H., Theeboom, M., & Van Cauwenberg, J. (2015). What Makes a Difference for Disadvantaged Girls? Investigating the Interplay between Group Composition and Positive Youth Development in Sport. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 51-66.

¹ Department of Sport Policy and Management, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

² Department of Public Health, Ghent University, Belgium

³ Department of Human Biometry and Biomechanics, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

⁴ Fund for Scientific Research Flanders (FWO), Belgium