



Sport socialisation and the role of the school

Niek Pot

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Sport socialisation and the role of the school

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Part I

Chapter 1

General introduction

Sport, physical activity and health

In recent years there has been an increasing concern about the health of the Western population, in particular of children (e.g., European Commission, 2007a; Ministry of VWS, 2011b; WHO, 2012). Figures show that the prevalence of obesity among children has been rising during the last part of the twentieth century (e.g., Lobstein & Frelut, 2003; Schokker, Visscher, Nooyens, Baak, & Seidell, 2006; Troiano, Flegal, Kuczmarski, Campbell, & Johnson, 1995). Although there are indications that the percentage of children and adults with obesity is stabilising, it remains a major health problem (Hedley, et al., 2004; Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2012).

A lack of physical activity is often mentioned as one of the major causes of the so-called 'obesity epidemic'. However, there is a dearth of evidence showing a decline in physical activity over the past decades (Gard, 2004). Notwithstanding the absence of scientific evidence indicating a causal link between declining physical activity levels and increasing health problems, many health policies are aiming at increasing the physical activity levels of the population in general and especially children (e.g., European Commission, 2007b, 2011; Ministry of VWS, 2008a, 2011a; Office of Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, 2008). As a result, the effect of physical activity on the health of children is a topic of interest among scholars worldwide (e.g., Bauman, 2004; Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010; Peng, Lin, & Crouse, 2011).

A commonality among most of these studies is that the type and context of physical activity is not the primary point of interest. Different types of physical activity are regarded as ways to burn calories, in order to counterbalance the excessive calorie intake of the Western population: physical activity is considered a medicine. In some cases, medical paradigms such as "dose-response relationship" are being used (e.g., Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010, p. 1). However, it seems too uncomplicated to regard Western health problems as a simple matter of energy-input versus energy-output (Gard, 2004).

Nevertheless, policy-makers and scholars have been looking for ways to increase the energy consumption of children. Often, the school environment has been studied as a context to increase the physical activity levels of children (e.g., Harris, Kuramoto, Schulzer, & Retallack, 2009; Jurg, Kremers, Candel, Van der Wal, & Meij, 2006; McKenzie, Marshall, Sallis, & Conway, 2000; Sallis, et al., 2001). Many projects aimed at improving a healthy lifestyle of children try to improve so-called physical activity and the fundamental movement skills of children

(e.g., Erwin, Beighle, Carson, & Castelli, 2013; Jurg, et al., 2006; Lubans, Morgan, Cliff, Barnett, & Okely, 2010; Strong, et al., 2005; Tremblay & Lloyd, 2010).

This health debate also influences the view on sports in the Western world. Sport policies use health arguments (e.g., European Commission, 2011; Ministry of OCW, 2012) and health policies mentioned sport participation as a means to meet the daily physical activity guidelines (e.g., Ministry of VWS, 2011b; Office of Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, 2008; WHO, 2010). In most of these policies, sport and physical activity are used interchangeably. A crucial question in this regard is whether interventions that increase physical activity or teach movement skills (such as jumping a rope or riding the bike to school) have an influence on long term sport participation. When sport is regarded as a social phenomenon that is embedded in society (Bottenburg, 2001; Bourdieu, 1984; Tamboer, 1992), it can be hypothesised that a focus on the social context in which sports take place is crucial for understanding ways to increase sport participation. Therefore, it is crucial to make a distinction between the concepts of physical activity and sports (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Tamboer, 1992). In chapter 2 and 3, this distinction and the consequences for sport policy and practice will be discussed in detail.

In this thesis, the focus is specifically on the social mechanisms influencing sport participation and not physical activity in general. The process leading to sport participation is called *sport socialisation*. The choice for this term is not random, as it is hypothesised that this process is to a great extent dependent on social and cultural structures (e.g., Bourdieu, 1984; Macphail, Gorely, & Kirk, 2003).

The assumption that underlies policies that aim at sport and health promotion is that by increasing sport participation levels health problems can be tackled. In addition, sport is assumed to have effects that go beyond health. For instance, sport participation is expected to counteract social problems (e.g., Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008; Spaaij, 2009b) and anti-social behaviour (e.g., Rutten, et al., 2007; Sandford, Duncombe, & Armour, 2008), increase self-esteem (e.g., Fisher, Juszczak, & Friedman, 1996; Slutzky & Simpkins, 2009) and moral functioning (e.g., Arnold, 1994), build social capital (e.g., Seippel, 2006; Spaaij, 2009a), stimulate academic achievement (e.g., Singh, Uijtdewilligen, Twisk, van Mechelen, & Chinapaw, 2012) and peace (Kidd, 2008).

Two important points regarding the interpretation of these studies have to be discussed. First, although most of these studies report correlations, they are often interpreted as causal relationships. However, the assumed causality between sport participation and the beneficial outcomes might be explained by other factors that have influenced both sport participation and the outcomes described

(Brettschneider, 2001; Green, 2012). Second, there appears to be a tendency to over generalise the results of these studies. Especially for policy-makers it seems tempting to interpret the correlations found in most of these studies to be applicable to everyone and everywhere, conserving a 'mythopoeic' image of sports (Coalter, 2007b, p. 1). However, what does seem to be a conclusion that can be drawn from most of these studies is that the context in which sport takes place is crucial for expected effects for participants (Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2007a). It appears to be extremely important what kind of sport activity is performed, with whom, where, when and why. "The greatest risk is the belief held by many that we can make a difference by just 'throwing the ball and letting them play'" (Danish, Forneris, & Wallace, 2005, p. 42).

The fact that not many studies have found evidence for positive causal effects of community sport, physical education or school sport participation (Bailey, et al., 2009; Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2007a, 2007b; Green, 2012) does not mean that sport participation cannot be beneficial. However, it is unclear whether sport participation actually contributes to the development of children (*socialisation hypothesis*) or whether children with certain dispositions are more inclined to participate in sports (*selection hypothesis*) (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Brettschneider, 1997).

There is a need for more – and perhaps a different type of – research to study sport socialisation in more detail and the possible effects of specific types of sport participation (Devís-Devís, Beltrán-Carrillo, & Peiró-Velert, 2013). Therefore, the general aim of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of sport socialisation, the potential role of the school context in this and the possible relationship between (school) sport participation and it's presumed beneficial effects.

Determinants of sport participation

When discussing ways to increase sport participation levels, it is important to know why children play sports. Therefore, many scholars have investigated the motivations and determinants of sport participation for children. In policy it is often presumed that the possession of sport skills is an important determinant of sport participation (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002; NOC*NSF, 2011). However, embodied (sport) skills are at best considered a minor determinant of long-term engagement in structured physical activity, such as sports (e.g., McKenzie, et al., 2002; Okely, Booth, & Patterson, 2001). Nevertheless, an absence of such skills may become a barrier for sport participation later in life

(Allender, Cowburn, & Foster, 2006; Cools, Martelaer, Samaey, & Andries, 2011).

It is conceived that sport participation at an early age is correlated with sport participation throughout life (Birchwood, Roberts, & Pollock, 2008; Scheerder, et al., 2006; Telama, et al., 2005; Trudeau & Shephard, 2008). Because the family is the primary socialising context at a young age, the family is considered a major determinant of sport behaviour (e.g., Green, Smith, & Roberts, 2005; Scheerder, et al., 2006). Indeed, many studies have found evidence for a strong influence of the family on sport participation and leisure-time physical activity (Birchwood, et al., 2008; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Devís-Devís, et al., 2013; Eime, Harvey, Craike, Symons, & Payne, 2013; Kraaykamp, Oldenkamp, & Breedveld, 2013; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; Wheeler, 2012). Interestingly, Nielsen, Grønfeldt, Toftegaard-Støckel and Andersen (2012) found that family background is important for sporting club membership, but not for physical activity levels. This is an important finding with regard to the policy goal of increasing sport participation levels with the aim of improving physical activity levels.

Although the family is considered a major determinant of sport behaviour, there seem to be some differences in the extent to which other sources of sport socialisation are also important for children. For instance, not only the nuclear family, but a network of families (Wheeler, 2012), peers or the school context can have an influence on sport socialisation (Allender, et al., 2006; Devís-Devís, et al., 2013; Green, et al., 2005; Wright, MacDonald, & Groom, 2003). The interplay between these socialising contexts has been found to depend on social class (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Humbert, et al., 2006; Stuij, 2013). Furthermore, the cultural context of a country is of influence on sport socialisation (Bottenburg, 2001; Green, Thurston, Vaage, & Roberts, 2013).

Considering these studies, it appears that a complex interplay of different abilities, socialising contexts and motivations determines (sport) behaviour (Devís-Devís, et al., 2013; Green, et al., 2013; Wright, et al., 2003). Therefore, the main aim of the literature review in Part I of this thesis is:

To investigate to what extent sport socialisation is determined by the possession of sport skills and what the influence of the social context in this process is?

Part II of this thesis will be introduced in chapter 4. In the next paragraph the theoretical framework that is used to understand the interaction between the determinants of sport behaviour are further explained.

Theoretical framework

Bourdieu's social theory

The work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984) can be used to understand the interaction between different determinants of sport behaviour. His key concepts of *habitus*, *capital* and *field* offer insight in how and why individuals behave, choose and value the way they do.

Bourdieu (1984) defined the concept of *habitus* as a set of “durable and transposable dispositions through which we perceive, judge and act in the world” (Wacquant, 2006, p. 6). The habitus acts as an unconscious structure that gives meaning to the world and at the same time is shaped by the world. It is the product of life-long internalisation of social conditions, constraints and opportunities of the environment people are exposed to (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006). Habitus is thus considered susceptible to minor changes if new social contexts are encountered. If sport has been part of the socialisation process, it can be expected that sport has become part of the (sporting) habitus. Sport participation can then be considered a manifestation of the (sporting) habitus (Skille, 2007).

The formation of the habitus is dependent on the amount and types of *capital* one possesses or acquires. Bourdieu (1986) considers capital to be a resource that is valuable in a particular context. He distinguishes three primary types of capital: economic capital (monetary resources and material possessions), cultural capital (skills and symbolic assets such as titles or knowledge) and social capital (social connections or networks and the resources that can be drawn from those networks) (Wacquant, 2006).

The social world is divided into different *fields*, which can be defined as contexts with their own values, rules, regulations and practices (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006). To be successful in a specific field, one needs a certain amount of capital relevant to that field. In addition, fields offers individuals different opportunities to act. Every action has specific consequences related to the values, rules, regulations and practices in that specific field (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006). Fields can also be interrelated. For instance, according to Bourdieu (1984) the field of sport and the field of family are strongly connected through social economic status. This results in a specific social stratification of (type of) sport participation, with typical upper class sports (e.g., golf and tennis) and typical lower class sports (e.g., football) (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 213).

Applied to sport socialisation, this means that those who want to participate in the field of sport need a certain amount of *sporting capital*, which can be considered a sub-group of cultural and social capital

(Coalter, 2007a; Nielsen, et al., 2012; Stuij, 2013; Wilson, 2002). If sport participation becomes self-evident and a natural part of a person's behaviour, sport becomes part of the (sporting) habitus. As the habitus has a lasting influence on behaviour, it can be suggested that if sport is part of the habitus, long-term sport participation is more likely to occur.

Sporting capital can be divided into technical aspects of sporting capital (e.g., sport skills, knowledge about rules and tactics) and socio-cultural aspects of sporting capital (e.g., network of sports-minded people, knowing social and cultural rules of engagement at sporting clubs, etc.) (Nielsen, et al., 2012). Both these aspects of sporting capital provide the foundation for the sports habitus and consequently for long-term sport participation (Green, et al., 2013; Light, Harvey, & Memmert, 2013; Nielsen, et al., 2012).

Although the habitus concept offers room for change when new fields are encountered (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012; Wacquant, 2006), the empirical work based on Bourdieu (1984) shows a strong reproduction of sport practices between generations of families (intergenerational transmission). The acquisition of new capital and dispositions related to sports by means of encountering new social settings does not occur very often. More specifically, Bourdieu (1978, 1984) showed that sport participation and the taste for certain sports are strongly determined by (socio-economic) background (Stempel, 2005). As this socio-economic background is primarily determined by the family, it is not surprising that numerous studies have shown an important role of the family context in sport socialisation (e.g., Birchwood, et al., 2008; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; Wheeler, 2012).

However, it can be questioned whether this reproduction and stratification of sport participation is still able to explain the complex reality of sport socialisation (Ohl, 2000). Some studies have shown that other contexts than the family, such as school or peers, might contribute to the acquisition of sporting capital (Green, et al., 2005; Macphail & Kirk, 2006; Stuij, 2013). In line with that, there are indications that sport participation patterns are more flexible than suggested by Bourdieu and that social class differences between (the type of) sport participation become less fixed (Hover, Romijn, & Breedveld, 2010; Kamphuis & Dool, 2008). In addition, the definition of sport has changed (e.g., fitness, life-style sports), which has consequences for the way in which sport participation is socially stratified. Furthermore, sport participation rates have increased in the last decades (e.g., Klostermann & Nagel, 2012; Scheerder & Vos, 2011), indicating more flexibility in sport socialisation than mere intergenerational reproduction. Therefore, it can be

questioned whether the concept of habitus is the most suitable when discussing sport socialisation. In addition, the rather abstract nature of the concepts of habitus and capital make them relatively hard to operationalise in empirical work, especially in quantitative studies. Therefore, the concept of *sport identity* is used as an indication of sports habitus and the possession of sporting capital in this thesis.

Sport identity

Sport identity and habitus seem to be adjacent concepts (Bottero, 2010; Zevenbergen, 2006), as they both refer to a (mostly unconscious) influence of social contexts on values, decisions and behaviour. However, there appears to be a small but important difference, as the concept of identity offers more room for change compared to the concept of habitus (Bottero, 2010).

Identity theory is based on the work of the *symbolic interactionists* (e.g., Mead, 1934), who recognised the social environment as important in the development of the self. Drawing on identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009), the self-concept of a person can be considered to consist of multiple identities, related to different social contexts that are encountered. The process of *identification* is a continuing process which is shaped by the contexts one encounters and the people one meets (Santee & Jackson, 1979). A given person can be a student, a son, a team member, a sportsman, a thief, a friend, a lover and so on. These different identities form a hierarchy, in which more prominent identities have the largest influence on behaviour, values and taste (Adler & Adler, 1987; Callero, 1985; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000). In identity theory, these role identities (McCall & Simmons, 1978) are formed by a process of identification in which the person categorises him or herself as taking up a role in pre-existing categories or groups. In this sense, individuals make use of existing social structures (Stets & Burke, 2000). Identification can precede actions and certain actions can help to realise and validate the role identities (Callero, 1985). Therefore, the interaction between identity formation and behaviour that is related to that identity is a reciprocal and self-reinforcing process. Identity theorists regard these role-identities to be defined partially by the group or social structure and partially by the person's self, instead of a hierarchical relation in which the group identity overrides the personal identity. In that way, individuals acting as members of a group retain their uniqueness. A role identity is formed by integrating the expectations and standards belonging to a role in a group (behaviour, knowledge, attitudes, etc.) with an already existing (relatively stable) self-concept, which is a product of the unique set of different role identities. In other words, identities are composed of

the self-views that emerge through identification with the unique set of roles in groups or social contexts (Stets & Burke, 2000). The strongest confirmation that a person is a member of a group, is the acceptance of others in the group (Stets & Burke, 2000). These role identities serve as bridges between the individual personalities and societal structures (Callero, 1985). They cannot be considered purely psychological, since they are related to social positions. Nor can they be considered purely sociological, in the sense that they are partly based on the personality (or personal identity) of the actor (Callero, 1985). In a similar vein, Bourdieu indicated that a layering of schemata make up the habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006). Within identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009), the different identities that make up the self-concept are constantly being recalibrated and reorganised under the influence of social encounters, although this probably occurs within the limits of (inherited) predispositions.

Sport identity is defined as the role that sport plays in somebody's self-concept and is positively correlated to the sport participation of a person throughout the life course (Brewer, Vanraalte, & Linder, 1993; Curry & Weiss, 1989; Curtis, McTeer, & White, 1999; Downs & Ashton, 2011; Lau, Fox, & Cheung, 2006; Wright & Laverty, 2010). Social interactions do have an influence on the place and meaning of sport in the lives of children, even though the role that sport plays in the life of children appears to be rather predetermined, within the limits of these preset conditions (Birchwood, et al., 2008; Miller, 2009; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012; Weiss, 2001). Given the reciprocal nature of identification, as outlined above, individuals with a strong sport identity are more inclined to participate in sports, but sport participation also has an influence on the formation of the sport identity. The concepts of sport identity and sports habitus are similar, although the identity concept offers more room for other socialising agents or contexts, such as school, peers or sporting clubs. In addition, an advantage of using the concept of sport identity is that it can be measured by means of a validated questionnaire (Brewer, et al., 1993).

Within the *field of sport*, certain skills and knowledge (*sporting capital*) are valued. When a child internalises the behaviour, values and rules of that field (*habitus*), it can be expected that this has an influence on the self-concept of the child (*sport identity*). Therefore, social encounters in the field of sport (social aspects of sporting capital) may lead to the formation of a sport identity. In addition to social encounters, perceived competence (technical aspects of sporting capital) also has an influence on the sport identity (Brewer, et al., 1993; Weiss, 2001; Wright & Laverty, 2010). Therefore, it can be suggested that both socio-cultural and technical aspects of sporting capital have an influence on sport identity formation.

In chapter 2 and 3, the intricate relationship between these concepts will be discussed further.

The question is whether the relationship between sport participation and sport identity can be explained in terms of a *selection* effect or a *socialisation* effect (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Brettschneider, 1997)? In other words, are individuals with a strong sport identity more likely to play sports, or can sport participation also lead to the formation of a sport identity, and if so, under which circumstances?

Research methods and thesis outline

In this thesis, several scientifically relevant questions have been studied. Some studies were conducted in cooperation with external parties who were interested in questions related to school sports. This resulted in a variety of methodologies on which the studies in this thesis have been built. The array of methodologies contributed to the external validity of the studies in this thesis (Goodwin & Horowitz, 2002).

In the remaining chapters of part I, the importance of the social aspects of sport socialisation will be further investigated. In **chapter 2**, the interplay between embodied skills, sport skills, social structures and sport participation will be explored by means of a conceptual analysis of the concept of *physical literacy*. The paper in **chapter 3** will discuss the use of the concept of *physical literacy* in the Netherlands by using a similar theoretical approach as in chapter 2, complemented with a policy analysis.

Part II of this thesis will be introduced in more detail in **chapter 4** and focuses on the potential role of school sport in sport socialisation. **Chapter 5** provides an overview of the history of school sport in the Netherlands and is based on policy documents and scientific literature discussing sport policy. In **Chapter 6** the Dutch and American school sport contexts will be compared based on a combination of historical and policy analysis and a description of empirical literature. In **Chapters 7, 8 and 9** three different studies about school and sports in the Netherlands will be discussed. The data for chapter 7 and 8 were gathered by means of written surveys. As this thesis concerns sport socialisation of children and youngsters, it was considered important to give these groups a direct voice in one of the studies (Dedding, Jurrius, Moonen, & Rutjes, 2013). Therefore, semi-structured interviews with high school students were used in chapter 9.

Part III provides a discussion and conclusion of this thesis in **chapter 10**.

Chapter 2

Physical literacy and sport identity

Based on:

Pot, N., & Hilvoorde, I. van (submitted). Physical literacy does not imply enhanced sport identity.

Introduction

Policies aimed at health promotion and disease prevention often deploy sport as a solution for numerous health problems (e.g., European Commission, 2011; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012; WHO, 2012). This led to the use of medical paradigms such as ‘dose-response relationship’ (Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010, p. 1) and ‘exercise as medicine’ (Sallis, 2009), in which a certain amount of sport or physical activity is presumed to lead to health outcomes. From this medical and political role assigned to sports, sport participation is seen as an important way to be physically active and to meet the guidelines for the recommended amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA). This means that in these policies, sport and physical activity are often understood as synonyms and are used interchangeably.

Because of the presumed health benefits, many sport policies aim at increasing sport participation levels. This implies that sport participation is considered behaviour that can be taught, shaped and altered. In most of these policies on health and sport, physical education (PE) and school sport are mentioned as contexts in which these behavioural changes can be stimulated (e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010; European Commission, 2011; WHO, 2012). It is conceived that by teaching children certain movement and tactical skills, the chances increase that these children will continue to pursue physical activities, including sports, throughout their life, leading to the presumed health benefits. This assumption is exemplified by studies on the positive relationship between training fundamental movement skills and physical activity patterns (e.g., Barnett, Beurden, Morgan, Brooks, & Beard, 2009; Stodden et al., 2008). A concept that is growing in importance worldwide in the promotion of physical activity is *physical literacy* (Nyberg & Larsson, 2012; Whitehead, 2001). In several countries, *physical literacy* is used as a philosophy that influences pedagogical models in PE, to form a basis for physical activity throughout the life course and an introduction into sports (Whitehead, 2010).

Based on this paradigm, the school is assigned an important function in shaping the physical activity patterns of children with the aim of healthier lifestyles. The argument that PE can contribute to the health of children seems to be a welcome validation of PE, in the continuing urge to account for results that substantiate the existence of PE as a core subject in the education system (Feingold, 2013). However, reducing the praxis of PE-professionals to making sure that children meet the MVPA guidelines can be considered an imminent threat to

the PE profession as well, because the main objective of PE would then be that children just move for a certain amount of time and intensity. This would limit the importance of the pedagogical, technical and didactic knowledge that PE teachers do need to have within a broader paradigm of sport and physical education.

However, there is also a considerable amount of scholarly work that considers physical activity behaviours to be largely constrained by social and cultural structures of the family (e.g., Evans & Davies, 2010; Green, 2012). This research shows that learning technical and tactical skills does not necessarily lead to long-term sport participation.

The arguments and language that are used for interpreting the importance of PE are not neutral. They are hypothesised to influence the way in which PE is legitimised, the way in which movement, physical activity, sport and health differ from each other and are related to each other. Furthermore, the arguments and language influence the role that the school is considered to play in shaping these behaviours. Therefore, we will critically discuss the concept of *physical literacy* (PL), as it is often used as a scientific framework to substantiate the role that the school can play in stimulating the pursuit of physical activity, including sports. First, we will explain the concept of PL in detail and we will discuss how it is used in the fields of PE and sports. Next we will argue that this application of PL in the field of sport is influenced by the language that is used in the conceptualisation of PL. Third, we will discuss the socio-cultural aspects of sport participation. Finally, in order to bridge the gap between PL and socio-cultural constraints on sport participation we will introduce and explain the concept of *sport identity*.

The concept of physical literacy

Physical literacy (PL) is defined as “the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to maintain physical activity throughout the life course” and is used as a pedagogical model for PE in several countries (Whitehead, 2010, p. 5). One of the reasons to develop the concept of PL was the perception that the importance of movement development in children was being neglected, due to the emphasis on ‘cognitive’ capacities, such as literacy and numeracy (Higgs, 2010; Whitehead, 2010).

A main goal of PL is to enable every child to reach his or her potential. The main developer of the concept, Margaret Whitehead, described how movement competences in a wide variety of circumstances may enhance the quality of life

(Whitehead, 2001, p. 136), contribute to the realisation of our human potential (Whitehead, 2007, p. 286), increase self-confidence, self-esteem, appreciation of the importance of health and fitness and access to high-level participation (Whitehead, 2007, p. 287) and assist in developing “a lifelong habit of taking up options in one or more areas of physical activity” (Whitehead, 2007, p. 295). These physical activities can be a variety of physical pursuits that lead to moderate to vigorous physical activity (Whitehead, 2010). What these pursuits look like may vary from one individual to the other and from one life stage to the other. For instance, young children will be more involved in play and adolescents in sports. Physical pursuits may also be expressed in other lifestyle choices, such as travelling by bicycle instead of the car.

The philosophical basis of PL lies in the existentialist and phenomenological tradition (e.g., Husserl, 1991; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). In this view, individuals cannot be understood apart from their environment. It is argued that “we create ourselves in interaction with the world” (Whitehead, 2007, p. 285). One of the main reasons to develop the concept of PL is to stress the importance of the embodied interaction for the development of children from a monist perspective, which is in contrast to the traditional dualistic substantiation of PE to train the physical in order to rest or vitalise the mind (Whitehead, 2010). Instead of teaching children a limited number of skills in a set of narrowly defined activities, as is the usual practice in PE, movement capacities should be understood in interaction with the environment in which they are executed (Whitehead, 2010). These interactions are considered crucial for being a human, as we are ‘beings in the world’ (Martínková & Parry, 2011; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The interaction with the environment is a central tenet in the phenomenological view. Within phenomenology this is described by the concept of *intentionality* (Husserl, 1991; Martínková & Parry, 2011). Motor intentionality can be described as “an embodied and concrete way of understanding or being meaningfully directed at ‘things’ in the surroundings.” (Standal & Moe, 2011, p. 267). This means that the meaning of an action cannot be isolated from the context in which that action is performed. This has consequences for understanding motor actions. For instance, cycling to school is a different action from cycling the Tour de France, although the biomechanical aspects may be similar (Standal & Moe, 2011).

According to Whitehead (2001, p. 129) the richer the interactions with the world are, the more individuals have the opportunity to develop their potential. PL provides the framework that describes the range of physical capacities with which human beings are able to interact with their environment and thus capitalise on their potential (Whitehead, 2010). The more extensive the bank of movement

competences is, the better humans are able to interact, respond and anticipate on these environments. These embodied competences can be divided into four aspects or stages: a young child's movement vocabulary, movement capacities, movement patterns and movement patterns specialised for a specific activity (Whitehead, 2010, p. 45). A young child's movement vocabulary encompasses movements of a typically developing child, such as rolling, grabbing, walking and clapping. The movement capacities described include, for instance, balance, coordination, control flexibility, power, endurance, running, jumping, climbing, hand-foot-eye coordination and rhythm (Whitehead, 2007, p. 287). These general movement patterns may develop into more refined movement patterns, such as throwing, bowling, catching, batting, dodging and hopping (Whitehead & Murdoch, 2006). Sometimes these "building blocks" (Whitehead, 2010, p. 45) combine into movements aimed at a specific activity, such as sports. It is stressed by Whitehead (2010) that the concept of PL is much more than bodily movements per se: it includes the interaction with the environment, that is, the ability to read and understand the environment and to be able to respond to it in an economical (efficient) and confident way.

Therefore, the embodied dimension of human existence should not be understood as a passive container that houses the mind, but as an "active player in existence" (Whitehead, 2007, p. 286). This is also related to the notion that PL has an influence on how we perceive ourselves and the world around us, consisting of the 'inanimate' environment but also of other human beings (Whitehead, 2007, pp. 289-290). The environment is grasped in terms of *affordances* that offer action possibilities (Gibson, 1979). Therefore, the world is crucial for developing the potential of humans.

The environment, or world, also has an influence on how PL is manifested. Drawing on the work of Burkitt (1999), Whitehead (2007, p. 292) states that "We are all similarly embodied, and rely on this dimension of ourselves for realising a range of human capacities. However the scope of any individual's physical literacy will be influenced by the culture within which s/he lives and the motile capacities with which the individual is endowed." There are studies investigating cultural differences in the way physical literacy is manifested (e.g., Adele Kentel & Dobson, 2007).

A relevant question is whether this cultural dependency and philosophical basis of PL is recognised in the application of PL in policy and practice (Whitehead, 2010). Whether this is the case will be discussed in the next section.

Use of PL in policy and practice

As indicated before, sport and physical activity are often considered synonyms in many sport and health policies. However, as will be argued in this paper, sport is a specific (socially and culturally relevant) type of activity. This arguments in this paper are specifically aimed at the use of PL in policies aimed at increasing *sport* participation and not *physical activity* in general. Attempting to increase the number of children involved in sports is often done by introducing different sports to children and familiarising them with the technical skills and rules of the sports. A model that is used by sport federations worldwide to describe the pathway of young children into a sport is the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model (Balyi, 2004), for instance in the UK (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002), Canada (CS4L, n.d.-a) and the Netherlands (NOC*NSF, 2011). The first three stages of this model (active start, FUNdamentals and learning to train) are summarised as *physical literacy* (Balyi, 2004). Developing PL in the (primary) school context is therefore regarded as an important prerequisite of sport participation, talent detection and eventually the level of elite athletes (CS4L, n.d.-b; DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002). Within the LTAD, PL is often understood as a scientific framework for fundamental movement skills (FMS) (e.g., Ford et al., 2011; Higgs, 2010), describing an arsenal of movement skills (e.g., catching, kicking, jumping and throwing) that will lead to more (and a higher level of) sport participation.

For instance, Canadian Sport for Life defines PL as “the mastering of fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills that permit a child to read their environment and make appropriate decisions, allowing them to move confidently and with control in a wide range of physical activity situations. It supports long-term participation and performance to the best of one’s ability.” (CS4L, n.d.-b). Furthermore, Canadian Sport for Life suggests that physically literate children will develop “more confidence in their bodies and better sport skills – with better chances to become the next Wayne Gretzky or Steve Nash” (CS4L, n.d.-b). This relationship between PL and sport participation is affected by matching fundamental movement skills to sport activities. In this way, it is attempted to gain insight into which sports are suitable for children with certain abilities. The Dutch sport federation NOC*NSF (2011, 2012b) uses the derivative term *physical alphabet*. They regard these ‘basic movement skills’ as important for life-long participation in sport and as the basis for talent development programmes. In the UK, the DCMS/strategy unit declares that “the aim should be for young children to develop sport literacy (an ability across a range of skills, with an emphasis on quality and choice)

[...] with the aim of enabling as many people as possible to become lifelong regular participants.” (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002, p. 16).

The question is why these governing bodies use the metaphor of ‘literacy’. It might be that they regard the connotation of literacy to contribute to the status of movement and exercise for children (Higgs, 2010). For instance, Tremblay and Lloyd (2010) suggested that PL might provide an opportunity to renew the focus on PE by using the importance assigned to literacy and numeracy. They argue that in order to assess the effectiveness of PL interventions, a measurement tool to test PL must be provided. In their opinion, a measurement tool is crucial “as a means to elevate the importance of physical education, increase the robustness of physical education assessment, improve monitoring and evaluation of physical education curricula, and provide important surveillance evidence needed to assist with resource allocation by decision-makers.” (Tremblay & Lloyd, 2010, p. 26). What Tremblay and Lloyd’s tool measures are fitness parameters, fundamental movement skills, pedometer data and knowledge about healthy lifestyles (Tremblay & Lloyd, 2010). Drawing on the theoretical framework of PL, the intentionality of an action is crucial for the meaning that a motor action has (Standal & Moe, 2011). However, in none of these measures of the PL test (Tremblay & Lloyd, 2010) it is incorporated why, where, when and with whom these fundamental movement skills or fitness tests are performed. Therefore, it is impossible to conclude anything about PL or sport skills based on this test. For instance, when considered from a phenomenological point of view, it can be questioned what the intentionality of push-ups is. Moreover, a clear Cartesian division of body and mind is illustrated by the definition of PL that Lloyd and Tremblay use, as the physical measurements of the objective body (fitness, FMS and the pedometer data) are considered separately from the cognitive test checking knowledge about healthy lifestyles. This illustrates that the concept of PL appears to be used as a means to augment the status of the ‘physical’ (Higgs, 2010). This is in essence contrary to the phenomenological and non-dualistic conceptualisation of PL as proposed by Whitehead.

In many of these policies, the school context (PE and school sports) is being put forward as an important context for the development of PL. However, as illustrated above, PL is often interpreted as FMS in sport and educational policy and praxis. In other words, it is conceived that sport participation levels can be increased by promoting FMS in the educational setting. In the next section, we will argue that the use of language in the conceptualisation of PL might facilitate this misinterpretation of the concept.

Misunderstanding the philosophical foundation of physical literacy

Although the concept of PL is claimed to depart from a monist point of view, it appears to be implicitly dualistic. The strongest example of this is the use of 'physical': 'physically challenging situation', 'physical competence' or 'physical activity' implies that there is something that is 'non-physical'. Whitehead (2010, p. 6) recognizes this friction, but defends the use of "physical" by arguing that alternatives such as embodied or motile may be unfamiliar and too esoteric for general use. A reference to a physical component can often be found in the definition of sport. This is what Tamboer (1992) called the *hidden essentialism*. However, it is the question what could then be considered a non-physical activity, or non-physical literacy. For instance, should chess, riding a bike to work or raising a glass of beer be part of the movement repertoire of PL? A frequent response to this issue is to conceptualise sport or exercise as activities involving larger muscle groups (Tamboer, 1992). This is exactly what happens within the concept of PL (Whitehead, 2001, 2010): "[...] it is proposed to define Physical Literacy prescriptively as being a universal concept, that is an end state relating to full human capacities, involving larger muscle groups." (Whitehead, 2001, p. 131).

It thus appears that within the definition of PL lies an (implicit) dualistic interpretation of 'physical activities' that require larger muscle groups. It is hard to detach this definition from sport or vigorous exercise. Although Whitehead (2010) explicitly wants to avoid a characterisation of PL as sport education, it seems inevitable that the field of sport is the dominant context in which PL becomes concrete and meaningful, especially for youngsters.

Physical literacy also implies a (quantitative) notion of 'richness' (more is better), which is illustrated by the metaphor of the "bank of movement competences" (Whitehead, 2010, p. 53). The suggestion is that the more movement competences one has, the more fluently one will be able to interact in different circumstances (Lloyd, 2011): "any increase in physical literacy will have a marked effect on quality of life" (Whitehead, 2007, p. 287). In addition, the building block metaphor assumes that movements can be stacked from movement vocabulary to movement capacities, movement patterns and ultimately movement patterns specialised for a specific activity, such as sports (Whitehead, 2010, p. 45).

Drawing on the phenomenological basis of PL, the suggestion that combining specific movement capacities leads to more refined movement patterns is questionable. The execution and meaning of movements are intrinsically dependent on the context in which the movements take place. Using

this concept of intentionality, the breakdown of movement patterns into more specific movement capacities or movement vocabulary is not possible. This means that learning a movement skill can only be used in a sport context in a reflexive way, when that sport context is incorporated in (learning) the motor action. What distinguishes sport actions from everyday actions can be characterised as ‘the sweet tension of uncertainty of outcome’ (Kretchmar, 1975; Standal & Moe, 2011, p. 262). Without that tension, the motor actions are not only experienced differently, they are also learned in a different way (cf. Merleau-Ponty, 1962). This has crucial implications for the question how sport participation levels can be stimulated. For instance, a baseball player must be able to throw hard and accurately, but the exact way in which he throws a ball is impossible to grasp when neglecting the excitement and tactical situations during a game. Considered from this phenomenological perspective, throwing a baseball varies every time due to the indefinite number of different circumstances in which the ball can be thrown. This means that throwing a baseball can only be meaningfully learned if it happens within the context of baseball. Just learning to throw a ball, like advocated in PL, may enhance the skill of throwing a ball and the pleasure experienced in doing that. It may even lay the foundation for fun and skill in a ball sport. However, it may also counteract enjoyment and sustained participation in baseball, as a child may find out (too late) that there is more to throwing a ball in the context of a baseball game than the mere skill of being able to throw a ball. In contrast to what is suggested by Whitehead (2010, p. 179), mere stacking of movement competences does not necessarily lead to certain refined or specific movement patterns, such as sports. However, building blocks may be defined, learned and taught, when deduced from a meaningful movement context.

What follows from this line of thought is that sport participation cannot be stimulated by learning fundamental movement skills. Nevertheless, many projects and initiatives aimed at increasing sport participation focus on learning the technical skills needed in a certain sport without the specific intentionality of performing these actions in a (competitive) sport context.

In summary, it can be concluded that the (dualistic) language and the metaphor of building blocks of movement that are being used in the conceptualisation of PL leave room for the interpretation of PL as (fundamental) movement skills without references to a context in which these skills become meaningful. Drawing on the phenomenological framework that underlies the concept of PL, it can be argued that these building blocks become meaningful when they are considered in the light of meaningful (sport) context. Therefore, it can be questioned what value PL

has when discussing sport participation. Does it, for example, include the socio-cultural aspects of sport participation?

Sport as a socio-cultural phenomenon

It is conceived in policy and practice that learning FMS or becoming physically literate will lead to sport participation. The “fundamental” in FMS presupposes that these movement skills are universal. However, the idea that these building blocks of movement are culturally neutral is misleading. Based on the work of Mauss (1934), it can be argued that the execution of movement actions is essentially shaped by culture. Techniques, as Mauss termed movement actions, are executed differently in different societies. Mauss illustrated this by comparing the different marching and digging techniques of French and English soldiers. These techniques are not just a product of physical arrangements and biomechanics, they are shaped by cultural habits. Therefore, an objective and universal measure of motor skills is not possible, as Mauss (1934) demonstrated that these skills are not objective and universal, but shaped by individual social and cultural circumstances. This begs the question what the relevance is of testing (fundamental) movement skills or PL, as Tremblay and Lloyd (2010) suggested.

The culturally dependent manifestation of motor actions can be illustrated by a young child playing with a ball. A child from North America is likely to pick up the ball with the hands and throw it. Whereas, if the child is European, it is more likely to kick the ball with its foot. The way in which these actions are executed are dependent on what can be described as *social affordances* (Kaufmann & Clément, 2007). These social affordances are the culturally and socially determined boundaries that limit the action possibilities for a given person. Mauss termed these culturally dependent behaviours *habitus* (Mauss, 1934, p. 73). Therefore, it can be argued that what is considered ‘fundamental’ is already culturally shaped and that this culturally shaped habitus is less likely to be influenced by policy interventions.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1978, 1984) used the habitus concept to signify the important influence of inherited predispositions on all kinds of thoughts, judgements and behaviour, including sport participation. He described how the possession of different types of capital (economic, social and cultural capital) unconsciously shapes the habitus (Bourdieu, 1986).

Capital refers to resources that are valuable in a certain area (Bourdieu, 1986; Wacquant, 2006). In sports this would be knowledge about the rules of the sport and the skills to participate in the game, but, for instance, also knowledge about

how to behave within a sports club and the sport mindedness of the social network of friends and family. Possession of this kind of sporting capital enables one to participate in sports (Bourdieu, 1984; Coalter, 2007a; Wilson, 2002). The acquisition or inheritance of sporting capital leads to an unconscious and natural tendency to participate in sports, something that could be termed sporting habitus (Skille, 2007). As this kind of disposition has a lasting influence on the behaviour of an individual, it can be argued that sporting capital and habitus are crucial for long-term sport participation. Because people from different social classes are differently endowed with this capital, sport participation is stratified along social lines (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984).

The importance of inherited sporting habitus for sport participation has been found in many studies indicating the importance of family context on sport participation (e.g., Birchwood, et al., 2008; Dagkas & Quarmby, 2012; Wheeler, 2012). Families are able to transfer what could be termed the social aspects of sporting capital, consisting of, for instance, that one knows the social rules at a sport club, has a social network that endorses sport and feels comfortable in the sport (club) context. These social aspects of sporting capital are crucial for sport participation, in addition to the more technical aspects of sporting capital (which is akin to what is termed FMS or sport skills), such as the motor actions, rules and tactics of sports (Green, et al., 2013; Jakobsson, Lundvall, Redelius, & Engström, 2012; Light, et al., 2013; Nielsen, et al., 2012; Stuij, 2013). Although the technical aspects of sporting capital can be learned during PE, school sport or sport projects, whether a child will actually participate in sports is largely determined by the social aspects of sporting capital. For instance, an underprivileged child might learn the 'vocabulary' of cricket during PE, such as the techniques, rules and tactics, but without the social aspects of sporting capital, such as network, money and knowledge of the social rules of cricket, it is not very likely that the child will continue to 'read' and 'write' cricket throughout its life. When considering ways to engage more children in sports, it is important to recognise the influence of these *social affordances* (Kaufmann & Clément, 2007) that may or may not facilitate sport participation in the long run.

However, it can be argued that the socio-cultural aspects of sport socialisation are unable to explain its full reality. Although sport participation is still stratified along social lines, the reality of sport participation does not seem to be as static (anymore) as Bourdieu (1978, 1984) suggested. For instance, individuals from the upper class start to try out traditional 'lower' class sports, (e.g., boxing and cycling) and persons from lower classes tend to pick up golf and tennis. In addition, sport

participation rates have increased in the last decades (Klostermann & Nagel, 2012; Scheerder & Vos, 2011), which might indicate more flexibility in sport socialisation than theorised by Bourdieu and his followers (Ohl, 2000). We argue that both skills (FMS or PL) and the social and cultural aspects of sport participation are important when considering ways to increase sport participation levels. Therefore, sport socialisation should be regarded as a qualitative process in which skills are matched to the specific, individual preferences (*habitus*). In the next section, we will suggest different terminology that incorporates more of these relevant aspects of sport socialisation without resorting to dualistic language.

Bridging the gap between movement skills and sporting habitus

If sport socialisation is indeed more complex than either the possession of movement skills or the influence of family structures by itself, a concept is necessary that encompasses both the influence of movement skills, explicit sport knowledge (rules, tactics) and the social and cultural constraints on sport participation. Although PL has these characteristics to some degree, the (dualistic) language and the metaphor of building blocks of movement that are being used in the conceptualisation of PL leave room for the interpretation of PL as (fundamental) movement skills without references to a context in which these skills become meaningful. The concept of *sport identity* (Brewer, et al., 1993; Curry & Weaner, 1987) can explain more of these relevant aspects of sport socialisation.

Sport identity can be defined as the role that sport plays in someone's self-concept (Brewer et al., 1993; Lau, et al., 2006). This means that sport identity has an influence on behaviour (sport participation), but also on someone's values and decisions. It brings together two important elements of sport socialisation: embodied capacities and the social context in which these capacities can be manifested. Within the conceptualisation of PL (Whitehead, 2001, 2007) it is comprehensively described that embodied capacities are an important aspect of the self-concept. It is conceived that the possession of embodied capacities influences how human beings conceptualise themselves (identity) and their action capabilities. It can also be expected that someone with a strong sport identity is motivated to learn new (sport) skills, as they reinforce their sport identity.

Drawing on identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009), the formation of an identity is also strongly influenced by the social context, in addition to the perceived embodied capacities. This influence of the social environment is in line with the influence of social contexts on behaviour that Bourdieu (1984) described.

For instance, a person with a strong sport identity is able to perform the skills of a sport (*technical sporting capital*), searches for contexts in which sport plays a role and knows how to behave in these contexts (*social sporting capital*). This interaction between embodied capacities and the social context can be illustrated by the example of a young girl that might learn how to row a boat during PE or an extracurricular programme. From the concept of sport identity, it could be argued that this girl needs to see herself as a sportswoman, or rower in this example. Of course, this includes more than the embodied skills of rowing. For instance, when she wants to use her embodied rowing skills, she will need to know how to get access to a rowing club, how to behave at the club and her parents will need the money to pay for her tuition and gear. These social and cultural constraints have an influence on how the girl sees herself as a rower, i.e. her sport identity. This girl is not likely to view herself as a rower if she is socially constrained not to row, even though she has the embodied skills to pull the oars through the water.

The relationship between sport identity and long-term sport participation has been demonstrated in several empirical studies (e.g., Curtis, et al., 1999; Downs & Ashton, 2011; Lau, Leung, Ransdell, & Wong, 2010). A strong sport identity makes sport participation self-evident, as it is part of how a person sees him- or herself. This means that even if sport participation is temporarily hindered, for instance when transferring to another school or by circumstances such as having children or a high demanding job or study programme, a person with a strong sport identity is more likely to continue participation, even if this means that frequency, intensity or type of sport has to be changed. Therefore, the drop-out rate of sport participation, which is often seen in these circumstances (e.g., Birchwood et al., 2008; Humbert et al., 2008), is expected to be lower for people with a strong sport identity.

Sport identity is a useful concept when discussing sport participation, because it merges the strengths of both the necessity for embodied skills and the social and cultural constraints of sport participation. Moreover, it circumvents the use of the contested and dualistic concepts “physical” and “literacy” and aligns more closely with questions about (changes in) sport participation during life events, such as transitions in school context (Wright & Laverty, 2010). Whether this concept will lead to less simplistic interpretation in policy and practice compared to the concept of PL should be investigated.

Conclusion

In this paper, it has been discussed how the concept of physical literacy might be useful for gaining insight into the question how sport participation can be influenced and what role the school context can play in this. Based on the concept of PL, it is suggested in sport policies that increasing fundamental movement skills or embodied capacities is an important stimulus for increasing sport participation levels. Although this application of PL as a framework for FMS is not in line with the original conceptualisation of PL, it has been argued that the language used provides opportunities for instrumental and dualistic interpretations. Neither learning movement skills during PE nor the cultural and social constraints can completely explain (changes in) sport participation patterns. Therefore, it was suggested the introduction of another concept when discussing sport socialisation: *sport identity*. In this concept, both the embodied skills and the social constraints have an influence on the role sport has in the self-concept of a person and the actual sport participation. Policy and curricula aimed at sport participation should not merely concentrate on skill acquisition, but on a proper and realistic introduction in the social context of sports in which the sport identity can be developed. In other words, curricula should be aimed more at learning what it is like to be a sports(wo)man (sport identity), instead of just how a sport must be played (sport skills). However, the growing tendency to look for accountable results in PE (e.g., FMS or fitness tests) (Tremblay & Lloyd 2010) may stand in the way of stimulating (harder to measure) social and cultural relevant practices in PE, such as a realistic introduction into the world of sports (Feingold, 2013).

Within the school context, sport identity might be facilitated by elements of Sport Education (Siedentop, 1987), sport literacy (Pill, 2010) and extra-curricular school sport competitions within or between schools, as they appear to have the potential to stimulate sport skills development in a socially relevant and realistic sport context. Furthermore, in countries where youth sport is mainly organised in sport clubs independent of schools, alliances between schools and sport clubs might facilitate an introduction in a socially relevant and realistic sports contexts. Future studies should investigate if elements of these PE practices can indeed stimulate the formation of a sport identity.

The health argument for stimulating sport participation has led to a 'medicalisation' of the sport (participation) discourse, in which sport is reduced to mere physical activity. Based on this idea, it was conceived that by teaching children the building blocks of movement, physical activity (including sports) can be stimulated. In this

paper, it has been argued that sport is a social and cultural activity that has merits that go above and beyond fundamental movement skills or health. This also means that socialisation into sports demands more than just being physically literate or knowing the rules of a game. Children can be introduced to the social and cultural praxis of sport in order to stimulate the formation of a sport identity, which is worth propagating and stimulating from a cultural and pedagogical perspective. The pedagogical and cultural 'story' of sports should be told and educated, before embodied capacities can become meaningful, contribute to the development of a sustainable sport identity and have a lasting influence on sport participation.

Chapter 3

A critical consideration of the use of physical literacy in the Netherlands

Based on:

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Introduction

As in many other countries, recent policies on sport and physical activity in the Netherlands put a great emphasis on health (e.g., Ministry of VWS, 2008a, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). In these policies, physical activity is explicitly linked to a healthy lifestyle and seen as part of a solution to different health problems, such as obesity and cardiovascular diseases. In order to get a proper 'dose' of physical activity on a regular basis, stimulating sport participation is considered an important goal. For instance, in the Dutch bid plan for the Summer Olympics 2028 (NOC*NSF, 2009), one of the goals was to increase regular sport participation among the Dutch from 65% to 75% (regular participation was operationalised as at least 12 times a year participating in a sport event). Although sport participation among Dutch children is already above that target (81% for children up to 17 years of age) (Collard & Hoekman, 2012), sport stimulation projects often focus on children.

The Dutch sport federation (NOC*NSF) and different sport associations have an important role in the process of increasing the sport participation levels. With the aim of increasing the number of sport participants, they adopted the Long Term Athlete Development Model (LTAD) as a guideline for the journey of young persons in a sport. The development during the first three stages of this model (active start, FUNdamentals and Learning to train) are summarised as *physical literacy* (Balyi, 2004; CS4L, n.d.-b).

Physical literacy was originally defined as "the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to maintain physical activity throughout the life course" (Whitehead, 2010, p. 5), and is a philosophy that increasingly permeates pedagogical frameworks for physical education (PE) in different countries (Whitehead, 2010). The philosophical foundation of physical literacy lies in the existentialistic and phenomenological tradition in which the interaction between the human being and the environment is central to human existence (e.g., Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The idea behind physical literacy is that when children learn to move in a wide variety of contexts and circumstances, chances are higher that they will maintain different physical pursuits throughout their life, are more confident in doing so and are better able to realise their human potential (Whitehead, 2001, 2007). Therefore, not just the skills in itself, but a skilful interaction with a certain context is considered important in the framework of physical literacy. In other words, movement skills are a means to interact with a variety of environments at the children's own pace and level and not as norms

on which children can be judged. Consequently, physical literacy should not be confused with *fundamental movement skills* (FMS). In FMS, the skills are at the forefront, irrelevant of the context. Whereas in physical literacy, the focus is on the interaction in a certain context by means of those skills. For instance, just throwing a ball (a fundamental movement skill) is different from throwing a ball during a game of baseball. In addition, the interaction between the skills and the environment fosters a pedagogical climate in which the purpose and effects of learning these skills can be appreciated. Learning just FMS without a reference to the way in which these become meaningful in a specific context can have a negative effect on the motivation and confidence of participants. Indeed over emphasis on FMS alone, perhaps delivered in very directed fashion, can damage motivation and confidence - preventing the development of physical literacy itself.

Within the concept of physical literacy, little emphasis is put on sport, as the physical activity engagement that is a central goal of physical literacy extends far beyond the sport context (Whitehead, 2010). In addition, sport is often associated with a competitive way of comparing between children, whereas physical literacy is aimed at personal development and realising the individual potential (Whitehead, 2010).

How is physical literacy used in the Netherlands?

In the Netherlands, physical literacy is not explicitly used as a framework for PE. The use of physical literacy is most noticeable in the policies of the national sport federation (NOC*NSF) and different sport associations. These sport associations (e.g., swimming, volleyball, track and field) mention physical literacy in their plans to engage children in their sport. In these plans, physical literacy is used interchangeably with fundamental movement skills (FMS) within the LTAD model. The idea behind this is that children with an extensive movement repertoire will be more skilful in their sport. It seems to be expected that this will lead to less drop-out due to the feeling of incompetence.

The Dutch sport federation endorses the use of the LTAD model. Even though it seems widely accepted that the first three stages of this model can be summarised as *physical literacy* (Balyi, 2004; CS4L, n.d.-b), the Dutch sport federation uses the derivate term *physical alphabet* to describe the FUNDamentals stage (NOC*NSF, 2011). What is meant with physical alphabet are basic movement skills, such as kicking, jumping, skating, hitting, etc. In contrast to physical literacy, as it is conceptualised by Whitehead and others, the emphasis of the physical alphabet is on fundamental movement skills. The idea seems to be that a better

understanding and control of the physical alphabet will lead to less drop-out of sport and therefore a higher number of sport participants.

Moreover, these policies are not only aimed at increasing the number of children engaged in sports. Physical literacy is also seen as a prerequisite of becoming an elite level athlete and is being used for talent detection. This idea is illustrated by the fact that in the research agenda of the Dutch sport federation, the concept of physical literacy is mentioned under the heading 'elite sports' (NOC*NSF, 2012a). It is expected that by testing whether a child mastered certain 'letters' of the physical alphabet, his or her chances of becoming an elite athlete (or at least be qualified as a talent) can be estimated.

Discussing the use of physical literacy

The use of physical literacy in the Netherlands can be questioned for three reasons. First, based on the philosophical foundations of physical literacy, it can be argued that de-contextualised movements (FMS) are different and differently learned than movements in a sports context (Standal & Moe, 2011). Second, the idea that learning the alphabet of movement will lead to sport participation is sociologically problematic. And third, the focus on elite athleticism does not seem to be in line with the basic principles of physical literacy. These three discussion points will be addressed in this paragraph.

Intentionality of movement actions

Central to the phenomenological basis of physical literacy is the concept of *intentionality* (Martínková & Parry, 2011). Motor intentionality can be described as "an embodied and concrete way of understanding or being meaningfully directed at 'things' in the surroundings." (Standal & Moe, 2011, p. 267). This means that the context in which an action is performed influences the meaning of that action, which has major consequences for learning and understanding motor actions. For instance, throwing a brick with the aim of damaging a window is a different action from throwing a ball in a game of handball, although the biomechanics may be similar (Standal & Moe, 2011). It can therefore be argued that learning fundamental movement skills, such as throwing, kicking, running and jumping is meaningless, unless it is related to a certain (sport or physical activity) context. Because of the absence of meaningful interaction with the environment, FMS may be of limited value when discussing sport participation. In addition, this de-contextualised way of considering movement is not in line with the philosophical base of physical

literacy. In the concept of physical literacy, the relation between the mover and the context is clearly documented, although there is some discussion about the possible incongruence between the philosophical foundation and the application of physical literacy (e.g., Lloyd, 2011). It can therefore be concluded that physical literacy and FMS are not the same and should not be used interchangeably, as is done by several sport associations in the Netherlands. In addition, drawing on the phenomenological tradition, it can be argued that learning these fundamental movements with a different intentionality than in a sport context, limits the usefulness of these movements for sport participation and talent detection. For example, being able to throw a ball in a basket does not mean that you will be able to throw a ball in the heat of a basketball game.

Building blocks of sports

One of the assumptions behind the sport policies aimed at increasing sport participation, is that learning the building blocks of movement (referred to as physical literacy or FMS) will lead to sport participation. Likening the concept of physical literacy to literacy as more generally understood in relation to the spoken and written word, it is assumed that learning the letters and words (FMS) will lead to autonomous reading and writing (effective participation in a range of physical activities, including sports). This assumption is illustrated by the fact that the Dutch sport federation not only uses physical literacy to conceptualise the foundation of sport participation, but also the term *physical alphabet* to describe the skills learned in the FUNdamentals stage of the LTAD. From a sociological perspective, this assumption is naïve, as it has been demonstrated that the social context of parents and peers have a strong influence on actual sport participation (e.g., Birchwood, et al., 2008; Kraaykamp, et al., 2013; Wheeler, 2012). For example, underprivileged children from a country without mountains may be introduced to the basic movements of snowboarding, by means of a virtual reality simulation offered during PE (this is actually done in the Netherlands). Through this instruction, they will learn the 'alphabet' or even the 'words' of snowboarding. According to the logic of the Dutch sport federation and associations, chances are that they will start participating in snowboarding frequently, as they became literate in that sport. However, the reality is that the country in which they live does not have natural mountains to practice snowboarding. In addition, many parents do not have the money or time to go on winter holidays. Therefore, the social circumstances do not afford them to use the 'movement vocabulary' that is being learned in an educational context. Although this example may be quite extreme, sociological research clearly indicated that sport participation, but also the type of

sport that is participated in, is strongly influenced by the social background (e.g., Bourdieu, 1978; Bourdieu, 1984). It is therefore not expected that just becoming physical literate will lead to sport participation, although being physical literate is of importance when the social circumstances afford to put that literacy to practice.

Active lifestyle for all vs. elite sports

The third discussion point about the use of physical literacy in the Netherlands is the fact that in the Netherlands, physical literacy is often used in relation to elite level sports. Also in this context, physical literacy is used as a framework for FMS, as it is conceived that a broad range of movement skills at a young age is a good basis for elite performance. In addition, it is believed that possessing certain FMS (or letters of the physical alphabet) can predict talent for a sport (NOC*NSF, 2012b). However, one of the reasons for introducing physical literacy was to broaden the movement education of children and not confine them too early to a specific sport. This even might be helpful in becoming an elite athlete, as some studies found a relation between elite performance and late specialisation in certain sports (e.g., Moesch, Elbe, Hauge, & Wikman, 2011). However, it seems to go against one of the key characteristics of physical literacy. This key feature would be that physical literacy is aimed at participation for all in different kinds of physical activity pursuits, in which everybody can reach his or her own potential, regardless of their level compared to others. When the focus is too early on elite performance, physical literacy loses its potential to involve a large group of children in physical pursuits. Physical literacy is not developed as a talent selection tool, nor does it seem appropriate to develop tests for physical literacy, like the test Tremblay and Lloyd (2010) suggest. Using physical literacy as a means to select, develop or test for elite sports is not in line with the aim of physical literacy to develop “a lifelong habit of taking up options in one or more areas of physical activity” (Whitehead, 2007, p. 295) for a large group of children. Being active does not necessarily have to mean being competitive. Moreover, being too focussed on norms, testing and comparing, might have detrimental effects on the pleasure and motivation for physical activity.

Conclusion

In the Netherlands, physical literacy is not explicitly used as a pedagogical concept in PE. However, physical literacy and the derivate concept *physical alphabet* are being used by the Dutch sport federation and several sport associations, as part of the LTAD and mostly as a synonym for FMS. In contrast to the philosophical

framework of physical literacy, FMS are not formulated in relation to the environment in which they are performed, which limits the relevance of these FMS for learning sport skills and for actual sport participation. In addition, from a sociological perspective, it is naive to ignore social influences when discussing sport participation. Learning the building blocks of sports or movements will not automatically lead to sport participation. Third, one of the key goals of physical literacy, to involve a large group of children in life-long physical activity pursuits, is not in line with the use of physical literacy in the context of elite sports, which is characterised by selection and exclusion.

We can only speculate about the reasons for the different approach to physical literacy in the Netherlands. These might be twofold. First, there seems to be a pressure to substantiate sport policy with scientific evidence in the Netherlands (Pot & Hilvoorde, 2013). The term *literacy* is therefore used as a 'scientific framework' for the importance of FMS, since it is associated with 'important' cognitive functions in many other educational areas (Higgs, 2010). A second reason for the way physical literacy is used in the Netherlands, might be the rather abstract formulation of the concept of physical literacy. Although this is recognised by the scholars developing the concept (e.g., Whitehead, 2010), hitherto there is a dearth of practical guidelines of how to use physical literacy as a framework without falling in the trap of reducing it to FMS.

The aim of the Dutch government is to increase health by endorsing an active lifestyle. Sport is seen as an important way of getting the right 'dose' of movement, and physical literacy is considered as an important basis for sport participation. Although possessing certain fundamental skills is definitely a component of sport participation, these skills have to be related to a meaningful (sport or physical activity) context. Why people participate in sports and physical activity is influenced by multiple factors (Green, et al., 2013) and cannot simply be reduced to possessing the right movement skills.

As argued in this paper, physical literacy is used in the context of sport participation in the Netherlands. Although physical literacy may be an aspect of sport participation, it does appear to be more useful to describe an active and healthy lifestyle in general without a specific reference to sports (Whitehead, 2010). Therefore, the context of PE would be more suitable to introduce physical literacy. Although PE policies in the Netherlands do not refer to physical literacy directly, PE is often mentioned by sport organisations to have an important job in learning basic movements and introducing children to the movement culture.

Ironically, until now, physical literacy in the Netherlands is being used for exactly what it was trying to avoid in the first place: describing movements of the objective (elite) body, irrespective of the context and the meaning or pleasure of performing those movements.

Part II

Chapter 4

Introduction to Part II: School sport as a source of sport socialisation

As argued in Part I of this thesis, sport can be regarded as a social phenomenon, that should, for several reasons, be distinguished from mere physical activity. A relevant question is how sport participation can be stimulated if sport participation is regarded as a socially constructed behaviour.

In recent years, there appears to be a growing interest in the school as a possible source of sport socialisation (e.g., Allender, et al., 2006; Cale & Harris, 2006; Eime & Payne, 2009; Green, et al., 2005). This is evidenced by sport policy documents, indicating an important role for PE and school sport in increasing the number of children involved in sport participation (e.g., European Commission, 2007b, 2011; Ministry of OCW, 2012; Ministry of VWS, 2008a, 2012; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008). Before further discussing this alleged socialising potential of the school context, it is important to have clear definitions of physical education and school sports. Physical education (PE) can be defined as curricular PE lessons that are obligatory for most children in the age of four to sixteen (Stegeman, Brouwer, & Mooij, 2011). Based on the framework of van Acker et al. (2011), school sports are in this thesis defined as sport activities that take place outside of the curriculum, in which participation is optional and which are organised in cooperation with the school. This definition is in line with the definition of *school sports* used by the Dutch government (Buisman, 1996). In chapter 5, a brief overview of the history and definition of school sports in the Netherlands will be provided.

One of the aims of PE in the Netherlands is to introduce children to a 'movement culture' (Stegeman, et al., 2011). Sport participation outside of the school can be considered a part of that movement culture. Therefore, one of the goals of PE is to introduce children to the world of organised sports. PE and school sports offer the opportunity to sample a number of different sports. For the study of sport socialisation this is an important fact, as sampling different sports appears to be crucial as a starting point for a successful socialisation into sports (Macphail, et al., 2003; Macphail & Kirk, 2006). Therefore, the school context can be hypothesised to provide a good complement to the socialisation of the family context, in which the focus is usually on only one (type of) sport (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984). Some studies indeed indicated that the school context might be able to contribute to the development of something akin to what is termed sport identity in this thesis, although these studies mostly considered PE and not school sports (Green, et al., 2005; Macphail & Kirk, 2006; Stuij, 2013). Stuij (2013) explained the formation of habitus based on the work of Basil Bernstein (1974, 1990). Bernstein (1974) distinguished four contexts in which socialisation takes place: the instructive, regulating, imaginary and interpersonal context. Stuij (2013) found that PE might

form an instructive context, especially for children of lower classes, in which the technical and tactical aspects of sporting capital needed for sport participation can be taught. However, the PE context does not provide a regulating, imaginary and interpersonal context, in which children can be introduced to the social context of sports (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Devís-Devís, et al., 2013; Stuij, 2013). It can be suggested that the social aspects of sporting capital are crucial for long-term sport participation (see Part I). The value of PE for sport socialisation might therefore be limited or at least limited to a specific group of children. This is in line with studies showing an absence of evidence for a positive influence of PE on sport participation, the so called *PE-effect* (Evans & Davies, 2010; Green, 2012, p. 3).

However, it is the question whether school sport might have a stronger influence on sport socialisation. In contrast to regular PE lessons, school sports can be hypothesised to not only provide an instructive context, but also a regulating, imaginary and interpersonal context (cf. Bernstein, 1974), in which the social aspects of sporting capital might be learned. This has to do with the specific characteristics of school sports. Usually, children are engaged in school sports for a longer period of time, form teams, have practice sessions, play matches and get more insight in other roles in the field of sports such as a coach, referee and volunteer. In terms of Bourdieu (1984), school sports might have the potential to provide the cultural and social aspects of sporting capital, in addition to the technical aspects of sporting capital. Together, these aspects of sporting capital contribute to the formation of *sport identity* and consequently long-term sport participation (see Part I).

Therefore, it can be hypothesised that school sport participation can contribute to the formation of a sport identity. In addition, since school sports are usually less expensive for participants compared to club sports, it might take away the constraint of economic capital on sport participation. An argument against a *school sport effect* on sport participation is that school sport participation might be more susceptible to selection mechanisms compared to PE. In contrast to PE which is obligatory for most, school sports can be hypothesised to influence only the ones that sign up for it. It might be, that these school sport participants can already be considered 'sporty' (cf. Penney & Harris, 1997) arguing for a *selection effect* (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Brettschneider, 1997). The potential to influence sport socialisation might be different for every type of school sport, as many types of collaborations between school and sports are defined as school sports (see Chapter 5).

Some studies have been performed regarding the relationship between school sports and community sports. For instance, a representative study investigating school sports in the Netherlands showed that 77% of the students engaged in school sports is also a member of a sports club (Stuij, Wisse, Mossel, Lucassen, & Dool, 2011, p. 95). This means that 23% of the school sport participants were not yet engaged in sports. For this group of students, school sports might provide a socialising context. Other studies investigated relationships between current school sport participation and community sport participation or the promotion of physical activity as well (e.g., Cale & Harris, 2006; Eime & Payne, 2009). Although these studies provided valuable insights, they are less informative about long-term sport participation. Therefore, the studies in the present thesis investigated the relationship between school sport participation and sport identity, as sport identity is considered to be a good indication of long-term sport participation (e.g., Curry & Weiss, 1989; Lau, et al., 2006; Wright & Laverty, 2010) (see Part I). This resulted in the following research question for part II of this thesis:

Is school sport participation related to sport identity?

As outlined above, school sports can be hypothesised to be a context in which sport socialisation can take place. In addition, school sports in the Netherlands have not yet been a topic of many studies. Therefore, part II of this thesis will focus mainly on school sports and will not consider PE. It has to be noted, though, that in the Netherlands in many cases PE teachers are involved in school sports and that in some cases school sports are considered an extension of the program provided in PE (Brouwer, et al., 2011). This means that school sport and PE cannot be seen as entirely independent activities.

In addition to increased sport participation, school sport is in many policy documents related to all kinds of academic effects, such as less school dropout, academic aspirations, investments in homework and better school results (European Commission, 2007b; Ministry of OCW, 2012; Ministry of VWS, 2008a, 2012; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008). These expectations are primarily based on American studies indicating an effect of school sport participation on the bond that students experience with their school (Jordan, 1999; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; Sturm, Feltz, & Gilson, 2011). However, it is the question whether this relationship between school sport participation and school bonding also exists in the Netherlands. Therefore, a second research question in part II of this thesis was:

Is school sport participation related to school bonding?

Outline of part II

These questions were investigated by means of different studies investigating school sports in the Netherlands. As already indicated, every type of school sport might have its own relationship with sport identity and school bonding.

In **chapter 5**, a history of school sports in the Netherlands will be provided and the definition of school sports in the Netherlands will be discussed in more detail. In **chapter 6**, the Dutch school sport context will be compared to the American school sports context, to be able to say something about the expectations of school sports that are based on American studies. In **chapter 7**, the relationship between student identity and sport identity and playing sports at sporting clubs at a campus will be described. **Chapter 8** will investigate the formation of student identity and sport identity during a one year school sport competition. Part II will end with **chapter 9**, describing a qualitative study investigating sport socialisation of high school students with a lower socio-economic status in more detail.

Chapter 5

A brief history of school sports in the Netherlands

Based on:

Reijgersberg, N., Lucassen, J., Pot, N., & Hilvoorde, I. van (2012). *Toekomstscenario's voor schoolsport: Inventarisatie, vergelijking en perspectieven van schoolsportactiviteiten in Nederland*. Utrecht: Mulier Instituut.

The relationship between sport and the school system

For a better understanding of the potential of school sports in the Netherlands, it is important to sketch the historical, cultural and social context of school sports. Because the complete and detailed history of the relationship between the education system and sports in the Netherlands is beyond the scope of this thesis, a brief history of school sports in the Netherlands will be outlined in this chapter.

The tradition of school sports in the Netherlands is shorter and less extended compared to for instance Great-Britain or the USA (Stokvis, 2009). The relative short tradition of extra-curricular school sports in the Netherlands can at least partly be explained by the historically problematic relationship between sport and physical education in the Netherlands.

Physical education (PE) in the Netherlands has long been influenced by German, Austrian and Swedish 'turnkunst' or gymnastics and Dutch medical authorities (Hilvoorde, Vorstenbosch, & Devisch, 2010). This type of PE was characterised by a resistance against sport, because it was regarded as an activity with an 'unpedagogical' emphasis on winning and competition (Stegeman, Lucassen, & Faber, 2001). In addition to this ideological argument, a more practical reason was responsible for the lack of sport in the school context. Physical educators were hesitant to stimulate sport participation, as the main purpose of PE was to compensate for the lack of exercise during other classes in school. Therefore, physical educators were afraid that their profession would become redundant if pupils would be physically active outside of PE (Stokvis, 2009).

This may explain why, in contrast to the USA, extra-curricular school sports did not develop strongly in the Netherlands. Sport was organised outside of the educational system in clubs that were completely independent of the schools (Bottenburg, 2011; Bottenburg, Rijnen, & Sterkenburg, 2005; Stokvis, 2009). In addition, Stokvis (2009) explained these dissimilarities between the USA and the Netherlands on the basis of the different relationships between school officials and pupils in the Netherlands and the USA. Furthermore, he suggested that differences in the social composition of the student populations in high schools in the Netherlands and the USA might explain the dissimilarities in school sport development. As a result, sport was kept out of the PE-curriculum and extra-curricular sports were not stimulated by physical educators in the Netherlands for large parts of the 20th century.

A chronology of school sport in the Netherlands

Despite the distance between PE and the sporting clubs, sport gradually entered the education system from the 1950s onwards (Stegeman, et al., 2001). In the beginning this was mainly through school sport tournaments during the school holidays, in which teams of one school or different schools competed against each other. This competitive approach to sport was in line with the competitive focus of sporting clubs in the Netherlands at that time. Although children were able to become a member of sporting clubs, they played the same game as adults and no special rules or variants of sports were offered to them (Heer, 2000).

However, during the 1960s and 1970s, youth sports and recreational sports were introduced in sporting clubs and sport was not regarded as merely competitive anymore. Youth sport was characterised by a pedagogical focus on the development of children, with adapted rules to optimise the sports performance and fun for children (Heer, 2000). This shift towards recreational and youth sports opened up the door of PE for sports, as the basic principles of recreational and youth sports were more in line with the pedagogical values of PE. However, the relationship remained fractious and sport and PE were still considered separate activities (Smit & Bottenburg, 1998). Nevertheless, school was seen as a context in which pupils could be introduced to different sports, by means of extra-curricular sport activities within or between schools (Stegeman, et al., 2001). During the 1960s and 1970s, school sports and PE were also starting to be mentioned in sport policies and campaigns to stimulate sport participation.

The 1980s can be considered a key period in which the role of sport in PE and school sports changed. During the 1980s, sport was increasingly regarded as a socialisation force in which children could be taught all kinds of relevant competences, such as discipline, group work or perseverance. This contributed to the increasing rapprochement between the education system and sports. In 1985, this resulted in the formalisation of the "School Sport Development Model" by the *Overleg Orgaan voor School en Sport* [Consultation body for school and sport] (Stegeman, et al., 2001). This model was mainly intended to introduce pupils to sports, with the aim of increasing club sport membership and participation. Local governments and sport organisations used this development model to base their policy regarding school and sport on. In 1986, a special commission for sport and physical education (Commissie Sport en Lichamelijke Opvoeding, 1986) indicated that school sport could act as an intermediate between the school context and sporting clubs and organisations. This advice illustrates the changing role of school sport during this decade and a changing attitude towards sport within the field of

PE, although not many advices of the commission were implemented (Buisman, 1996).

In the 1990s, school sport was still considered a means to introduce pupils to sports with a possible transfer to sporting clubs and long term sport participation (Smit & Bottenburg, 1998):

“Physical education and school sport are important ways to move youngsters to sports, because all youngsters can be reached through school”
(Ministry of VWS, 1996, p. 31)

In addition, the ‘societal relevance’ of (school) sport was gaining importance and the (political) idea that school sports could contribute to the development of pupils grew and a large number and types of activities were organised under the umbrella of school sports (Smit & Bottenburg, 1998):

“In the school context [...], sport has an important impact on society”
(Ministry of VWS, 1996, p. 14)

The integration of sport within the school was now considered normal and the project “Jeugd in Beweging” [Moving Youth] (1995-2001) (Raad voor het Jeugdbeleid, 1995) intensified sport projects in and around school, with the aim of generating all kinds of positive effects (Heer, 2000). Although different types of activities were defined as school sports, a general shift was observed from sport tournaments within and between schools to sport introduction and sport orientation.

In recent years, the relationships between schools and sports were further emphasised in policy and endorsed by the national sport federation NOC*NSF (2009, 2012c), the national PE federation KVLO (2010, 2013) and the ministries of Sport and Education (Ministry of VWS, 2005, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2011b; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008). A partnership between the Dutch Olympic committee and the ministries of Sport and Education resulted in the “Alliance School and Sport” (2005-2008), which endorsed all kinds of collaborations between school and sports, aiming at different social, psychological and health outcomes:

“School, sport and culture can make an important contribution to social cohesion. A coherent choice of educational, sport and cultural activities offer a rich learning environment in which children and youngsters have the chance to develop their talents, gain social skills and have fun” (Ministry of OCW, 2007, p. 1)

“Sports can contribute to the bond that students have with their school and, in alternation with the cognitive subjects, lead to better concentration and better school performance” (Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008, p. 1)

“By specifically aiming sport- and exercise interventions, the cabinet wants to contribute to the prevention and decrease of overweight among youngsters” (Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008, p. 9)

A typology of school sport in the Netherlands

The current collaborations between schools and sports in the Netherlands can be divided into three types: sports at school, sports near school and sports representing school (Pot & Hilvoorde, 2011).

Sports at school include the sport introduction and orientation within the (PE-)curriculum. Also the annual sports days, in which children from the same school play sports against each other, are considered sports at school. There is also an increasing number of “sport active” schools, who committed themselves to organise additional sport-related classes and programs for their pupils within the curriculum (Werff, Wisse, & Stuij, 2012). This type of school sport is not considered in this thesis.

Sports near school are the opportunities to play sports in and around the school building without too much involvement of the school. In this case, the facilities form the main connection between the schools and sport. For instance, there is an increasing amount of out of school care focussed at sports (Lucassen, Wisse, Smits, Beth, & Werff, 2011) and some sporting clubs provide training sessions at schoolyards in an attempt to overcome economic and time barriers to sport participation (Boonstra & Hermens, 2010). Another example of this type of school sports are schools that have athletic facilities around the school and sporting clubs and schools that reside on the same campus (see Chapter 6). In the Netherlands, this type of school sports is a rather new phenomenon.

Sports representing school are initiatives in which pupils from one school represent their school against teams from other schools. These can be local

competitions between teams of different schools (see Chapter 7) or national tournaments between schools in different sports (KVLO, 2010).

School sports can be defined as sport activities that take place outside of the curriculum, in which participation is optional and which are organised in cooperation with the school (Acker, et al., 2011). Therefore, only *sports near school* and *sports representing school* are considered in this thesis.

Despite all these initiatives between schools and sports, club sport still remains the dominant youth sports context, as was evidenced by a representative study among Dutch youth (Stuij, et al., 2011). A mere 22% of these students participated in school sports, whereas 71% was member of a sporting club. In addition, the average amount of time spent in these sport contexts differed significantly: 157 minutes per week on club sports and only 18 minutes per week on school sports.

Conclusion

As was illustrated above, the relationship between the school system and sport organisations and clubs changed during the 20th century from friction and ideological distance to an acceptance of each other's strengths and the willingness to collaborate (Brouwer, et al., 2011). This change in the relationship between the school context and sports coincided with a changing role of sport in society in general, with a stronger emphasis on the potential health, social, psychological and academic effects of sport participation. As the school context is considered an important socialising context, the expectations of school sport are enormous:

“Sport and education belong to each other and amplify each other. Sport and exercise is fun for most children and youth and contributes significantly to the motor, social and cognitive development and the health of children and youth. This may lead to better school performance and less school drop-out” (Ministry of OCW, 2012, p. 1)

“Sport and exercise form parts of a healthy and active lifestyle [...]. Therefore, the coalition expresses the ambition to intensify sport and exercise in the education system” (Ministry of VWS, 2012, p. 4)

However, the evidence that substantiates these expectations of school sports have been critically discussed (e.g., Bailey, 2006; Coakley, 2009; Smith & Leech, 2010).

In Dutch policy documents hardly any references to scientific underpinnings of the expectations of (school) sports can be found, although some refer to a research report reviewing mostly North American school sport studies (Stegeman, 2007). Many of these North American studies reported relationships between school sport participation and all kinds of health, educational, psychological and social effects (e.g., Broh, 2002; Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003; Fisher, Juszczak, & Friedman, 1996; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Hartmann, 2008; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; Trudeau & Shephard, 2008).

As already mentioned, school sport in the USA has a different social function and organisation, compared to the Netherlands. In the next chapter, it will be argued that by basing the expectations of Dutch school sports on American studies, the important influence of the specific cultural context of school sports on the possible effects of school sports is neglected.

Chapter 6

School sports in different cultural contexts

Based on:

Pot, N. & Hilvoorde, I. van (2013). Generalising the effects of school sports: comparing the cultural contexts of school sports in the Netherlands and the USA. *Sport in Society*, 16(9), 1164-1175.

Introduction

School sports have been a significant topic of interest among sport scholars (Hartmann, 2008). In these studies, participation in school sports has been correlated with a reduction in deviant behaviour and school dropouts, an increase in popularity with peers, improved self-esteem, exercise behaviour, school grades, increased educational aspirations, stronger school bonding and sport identity formation (e.g., Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Broh, 2002; Curtis, et al., 1999; Davalos, Chavez, & Guardiola, 1999; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Goldberg & Chandler, 1989; Hartmann & Massoglia, 2007; Holland & Andre, 1987; Lipscomb, 2007; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002, 2003; McNeal, 1995; Melnick, Vanfossen, & Sabo, 1988; Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell, & Sabo, 2005). Across many school sport settings, stakeholders (politicians, organisations in the field of physical education (PE), sport programme developers and scientists) have posed and conserved the image of the beneficial effects of school sports as being applicable to every participant (Coakley, 2009). In other words, there is a tendency to universalise and 'over generalise' the results of school sport studies. For instance, in the Netherlands, the term school sports is uncritically used as an umbrella for all kinds of different sports activities that have something to do with school.

Converging interests have strengthened the alliance between influential institutes in sport, PE and the government. Sport-related effect studies are in the interest of both sport organisations and ministries of education. A positive image of school sport is of interest for sport organisations, because they can impose their sport-related goals on PE. The broadly interpreted concept and positive image of school sport is in the interest of the ministry of education as well, because they can transfer more responsibilities to both sport (especially with regard to the more efficient use of sport infrastructure) and the schools. The 'imported evidence' is, for example, used to underline and reinforce the policy in which sport functions as an instrument for day care. At the same time, the investments in extracurricular sport and 'sport coaches' (introduced to bridge the gap between sporting clubs and schools) distract the attention from the experienced need for more investment in PE itself.

The alliance between sport and PE also seems to be induced by the increasing political interest in elite sports and talent development. This momentum is used throughout PE to legitimise its role in the curriculum. Because of the reduced attention for the pedagogical perspective, the world of PE is under increasing pressure to reinforce its purpose with arguments that are related to the political

ambitions within (elite) sports. For example, the ambition to be in the top 10 of the Olympic medal index, the ambition to organise the 2028 Olympics and the increased attention for elite sports can be seen as both catalysts and results of this growing importance of sports (Ministry of VWS, 2008a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008; NOC*NSF, 2009). Given the relative impotence of the pedagogical discourse in the legitimisation of the importance of PE, organisations working in the field of schools and PE are more or less forced to incorporate this rhetoric in order to reinforce their very existence (Houlihan & Green, 2006). In addition, there is an increased pressure to substantiate policy with (scientific) evidence. Taken together, this has led organisations in the field of PE and schools to search for evidence-based activities that seem to have all kinds of beneficial effects, such as school sports in the USA. In the search for this evidence, a critical analysis of the exact activity and the exact results of these studies are arguably not in the best interest of these organisations. The demand for science-based practice has resulted in various studies that have considered a breadth of activities and concepts, such as PE and sports, sport education, sport participation and extracurricular activities in the substantiation of school sports in the Netherlands. In other words, stakeholders have great interest in a 'mythopoeic' (Coalter, 2007b) image of 'school sport', in the broadest sense of the word, because it can be associated with all kinds of beneficial effects for a large group of people, irrelevant of the context.

However, notwithstanding the pressure to generate widespread positive outcomes, a vast number of researchers have indicated that it is important to distinguish under which circumstances and to whom the beneficial and possibly detrimental correlates of school sports apply (Coakley, 2009; Hartmann & Massoglia, 2007; Spaaij, 2009a). What is usually defined as 'context' in these studies are the different outcomes for children with different social(-economic) backgrounds, different races, genders, types of sport, and different school variables, such as the neighbourhood or the sport-mindedness of the school (Crosnoe, 2001; Curry & Weiss, 1989; Eitle & Eitle, 2002; Erkut & Tracy, 2002; Fauth, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007; Guest & Schneider, 2003; Hartmann, 2008; Melnick, Sabo, & Vanfossen, 1992; Miller, 2009; Sokol-Katz, Kelley, Basinger-Fleischman, & Braddock, 2006). Although differentiating the findings for these groups strengthens the validity of the studies, an important similarity between most of these studies is that the majority have been conducted in the USA and therefore follow the definition of school sports as interscholastic athletics (Coakley, 2011). In contrast, in most European countries, such as the Netherlands, the organisation and social function of school sports are significantly different from the USA (Stokvis, 2009).

We propose that the way in which school sports are organised and function socially is strongly determined by the cultural context in which the school sports take place. It is possible that some of the 'effects' of school sports that have been found in the abovementioned studies are dependent on the culturally determined organisation and social functioning of school sports in the USA (Coakley, 2011). Because of the varying cultural context of school sport in respective countries, it is expected that the 'effects' of school sports may be liable to differ in other countries as well.

In order to investigate these hypotheses, the cultural contexts of school sports in the USA and the Netherlands are discussed, after which the organisation and social functioning of school sports in both countries are compared on five elements.

Cultural context of school sports in the USA and the Netherlands¹

Although the complete histories of American and Dutch school sports are beyond the scope of this chapter, a brief discussion is crucial for the understanding of the cultural context of school sports in both countries (for an elaborate analysis, see Stokvis, 2009). In the beginning of the twentieth century, all sorts of extracurricular activities were developed at colleges across the USA, including sports activities. During the twentieth century, high schools copied this system of extracurricular activities. Youth sports in the USA were therefore integrated within the educational system and have remained embedded in this system ever since (for a detailed overview, see Mandell, 1984; Rees & Miracle, 2000). Schools in the USA have extended sport facilities on campus and numerous teams participate in interscholastic competitions and tournaments. These interscholastic events are characterised by a strong emphasis on competition and are very selective in nature. Achievements in these interscholastic events are important for the status of both students and schools (Gems & Pfister, 2009).

In contrast to the American evolution of youth sports, most European countries, such as the Netherlands, developed a system of sports clubs that is independent of the education system (Bottenburg, 2011; Bottenburg, et al., 2005). Stokvis (2009) gives a possible explanation for this discrepancy by comparing the relationship between students and school officials in the USA and the Netherlands, the social composition of the high school student populations and by explaining

1 The argumentation in this chapter is based on the dominant patterns of school sports in the Netherlands and the USA. It should be noted that these patterns are not absolute and other forms of youth sports exist in both the Netherlands and the USA.

the ideology of PE in the Netherlands. In the USA, students organised clubs to perform all kinds of activities, including sports, outside of the official school hours. Because of disciplinary problems with some of these clubs, the school officials brought these clubs under the supervision of the school authorities. As a consequence, sporting clubs were incorporated into the educational system. In the Netherlands, students also established sporting clubs outside of the schools and independent of the school officials. School officials felt no need to place such student clubs under their supervision as Dutch students and parents cooperated with school authorities. Another reason for the absence of student clubs being under supervision of the school is that, in the Netherlands, separate high schools existed for students of different social classes, which made the populations in these high schools rather homogeneous. Because of this homogeneity, these students felt no need to further associate with the schools in clubs, fraternities or sororities (Stokvis, 2009). In addition, PE in the Netherlands was highly influenced by the German, Austrian and Swedish gymnastics and Dutch medical authorities, which were characterised by a resistance against sports for its 'un-pedagogical' elements such as competition, selection and a strong focus on winning. The medical authorities considered competitive sports as dangerous, unhealthy or even immoral (Hilvoorde, et al., 2010). As the main purpose of PE was to compensate for the sedentary behavior during other classes at school, physical educators were afraid their profession would become redundant because of the growing popularity of sports (Stokvis, 2009). For these reasons, sports were excluded from schools in the Netherlands and organised in sporting clubs independent of schools.

Because of the dominance of club sports in the Netherlands, sports and educational policies did not lay great emphasis on collaborations between schools and sports in most of the twentieth century. However, the numerous promising research results of school sports in the USA directed the attention of Dutch politicians and scientists towards the American school sports system. In an attempt to counteract increasing health-related and behavioural problems among youth, to increase regular sports participation and to be within the top 10 of the medal index at the summer Olympics, some elements of American school sports were introduced in the Netherlands (Ministry of VWS, 2008a, 2011a, 2011b; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008; NOC*NSF, 2009; Stegeman, 2007).

The introduction of elements of American school sports resulted in schools with elaborate sport facilities, which use American sport campuses as an example. However, in contrast to the USA, the sport facilities on Dutch sport campuses are not (primarily) used for curricular or extracurricular activities. Instead, the

sport facilities on these sport campuses are used by independent sporting clubs. Everyone can become a member of these sporting clubs, whether or not they are a student of the school. As there are no curricular or extracurricular activities at these sporting clubs on the campus, the only bond between the school and the sporting clubs is the location. Nevertheless, the described organisational structure is defined as school sports in the Netherlands. In addition to sport campuses, some high schools and even elementary schools or kindergartens are labelled as 'sports oriented' or 'sports-active'. This means that these schools provide extra hours of PE, PE-related courses within the curriculum or lunch break sports and active games. Some schools also specialise in facilitating elite club sport athletes or talents in their educational programme. Furthermore, there is an increasing interest in interscholastic competitions and tournaments in the Netherlands, inspired by American interscholastic athletics (Sage, 1990). A difference with the USA is that the duration of these tournaments varies between one to five days divided across the school year (KVLO, 2010). The main goal of these interscholastic competitions and tournaments in the Netherlands is to increase sport participation among students. Therefore, these events are open to everybody, regardless of their grades in other subjects and their sport skills. Not every school participates in these interscholastic competitions and tournaments, which might be explained by the fact that club sports are regarded as more important and not every school has enough interested students to form a team.

While there are a number of existing forms of school sports, we focus our analysis on interscholastic sport participation in both countries to be able to compare both school sport contexts. In this chapter, American school sports are defined as extracurricular sport activities at high schools in which students are members of a sports or athletic team, competing in interscholastic (extramural) leagues². Dutch school sports are defined as participation in interscholastic competitions or tournaments between high schools.

We hypothesise that although some elements of the American school sports can be imported, such as organising interscholastic events, the cultural context of school sports will constrain the possibilities of organising school sports and determine the social function that school sports have. The organisation and social functioning of school sports are expected to relate to some of the 'effects' of school sports. It is therefore expected that these 'effects' are different in the Netherlands. These hypotheses will be investigated in the next section by comparing the Dutch

2 In some of the referenced literature, different extracurricular activities or intra- and extramural activities were investigated. From these references, we only used the claims concerning extracurricular and extramural sports.

and American school sports contexts on five elements that refer to the organisation and social functioning of school sports. These elements were chosen because they represent the dominant image of American school sports. In addition, it is hypothesised that most of these elements relate to some of the presumed 'effects' of school sports in the USA. Therefore, it is useful to investigate how these five elements relate to school sports in the Netherlands.

The cultural context of school sports: comparing the Netherlands and the USA

Competitiveness

In the USA, school sports are usually defined as interscholastic (varsity) athletics, in which the best athletes from schools compete against each other. These interscholastic school sports are very selective in nature and highly competitive (Park, 2007). This competitiveness is characteristic of the American mentality and can be seen in many areas of life, not only sports (Kohls, 1984). The competitive characteristic of interscholastic school sports is important for the social functioning of school sports in American schools. For instance, being selected for the school team is important for the status of student-athletes within the school community (Miller, 2009). The competitiveness of interscholastic school sports is further illustrated by the rituals and symbols that surround the interscholastic matches. These rituals and symbols tend to enhance the competitiveness and the importance of beating the opponent (Stokvis, 2009).

Although competitiveness is not as much rooted in the Dutch culture as it is in the American culture, sports are a social sphere in which competition and rivalry are more accepted (Curry & Weiss, 1989). However, in the Netherlands, this competitiveness is mainly present in club sports whereas most manifestations of interscholastic school sports are characterised by a sports-for-all nature. This may be the result of the dominance of club sports and the nonorganic relationship between the educational and sports systems in the Netherlands, as described earlier. Since one of the main goals of interscholastic school sports in the Netherlands is to increase sport participation rates among children, excluding children by means of selection and competition is not a desired effect. In addition, competitiveness in Dutch interscholastic school sports is not stimulated, as performances in school sports have little or no influence on the status of either the school or the students involved. Therefore, rituals and symbols that provoke (and are provoked by) competitiveness are absent in most schools.

The varying emphasis on competition in interscholastic school sports is rooted in both the Dutch and American cultures. It is therefore unlikely that the social functioning of interscholastic school sports, which is highly correlated with competitiveness, will be the same in these countries. As a consequence, changes in this social functioning are unlikely to be expected.

Intensity

In the USA, interscholastic high school sports competitions are weekly events in which school teams compete against other schools in regional, state or nationwide divisions. At most schools, these competitions are taken very seriously and the athletes practice numerous times a week, even outside the season. As mentioned earlier, the duration of interscholastic competitions in the Netherlands varies from one to five days throughout the year (KVLO, 2010). This comparatively low intensity can be explained by the dominance of club sports in the Netherlands (Bottenburg, et al., 2005). Not every school participates in these interscholastic school sport events and students who are simultaneously engaged in club sport will have less time and (financial) resources to spend on school sports.

Interscholastic school sports have often been linked to changes in self-perception and behaviour, such as reductions in deviant behaviour and increased educational aspirations and self-esteem (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Hartmann & Massoglia, 2007; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). These changes are processes that require longer periods of time (Burke & Stets, 2009). Since student-athletes in the USA are intensively engaged in school sports for a longer period of time, it is likely that participating in American interscholastic school sports is related to these behavioural changes. In the Netherlands, the intensity of school sport engagement is relatively low, and therefore behavioural changes have no time to develop through participation in interscholastic school sports. The historically evolved differences in the intensity of school sports might thus be of influence on the correlates of interscholastic school sports with some of the behavioural changes observed in school sports studies.

Prestige of schools

American interscholastic school sports are important not only to the athletes and coaches but also to the entire school community and even the school's home town. In most local newspapers, interscholastic school sports take up numerous pages; the local news networks report their results and interscholastic matches are a dominant weekend issue (Brettschneider & Brandl-Bredenbeck, 2007; Rees & Miracle, 2000; Stokvis, 2009). Schools use this media exposure to

distinguish themselves and use the results of their student-athletes to promote their institutions. In school marketing, the sports results are sometimes implicitly or even explicitly associated with the academic standard of the schools (Coakley, 2009). Therefore, there is potential for great prestige that can be gained from interscholastic school sports in the USA. During athletic events, students are primarily representing their schools and schools take advantage of the image of their student-athletes.

In the Netherlands, schools do not use the interscholastic school sports results in their marketing strategies because nobody associates the school's athletic performance with the academic standards of the school. Therefore, interscholastic sports achievements do not gain any media coverage and although students represent their school, such success receives very little public attention. As mentioned earlier, there is a growing tendency in the Netherlands to label schools as 'sports-oriented' or 'sports-active', or to facilitate elite club sport athletes or talents in their educational programme. These schools do tend to use these sports-related characteristics in their marketing. This, however, has nothing to do with school sports as it is defined in the present chapter.

The differences in prestige that can be gained from interscholastic school sports are illustrative of the different significance school sports have to the (school) community in the USA and the Netherlands.

Status of athletes

Within the American high school community, athletes have a higher status and are often more prominent than other students (Broh, 2002). Being a 'jock' will provide a high status along with the potential benefits and drawbacks (Crosnoe, 2001). It is conceivable that this higher status is of influence on the connection that a student-athlete feels to the school, since their status is depending on their relationship to the school community. In addition, this higher status will provide a more positive self-image and may therefore have consequences for the student-athlete's self-esteem (e.g., Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Hintsanen, Alatupa, Pullmann, Hirstiö-Snellman, & Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2010; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). It must be noted, however, that even in the USA where student-athletes in general have a higher status, the types of sports that are practised are also likely to influence the status that a student gains. For example, excelling as a football player will likely raise a student's status to a much larger degree than being on the badminton team.

With the exception of those participating, the teachers and students in Dutch school communities are usually unaware that their school team is competing in an

interscholastic event. Moreover, talented athletes – for example, students who play for professional soccer clubs – are often not even allowed to play on school teams due to potential risk of injury. Because interscholastic school sports are rather insignificant within the Dutch school communities, participating in interscholastic school sports is unimportant for the student's status within the school community and the self-esteem that is suggested to be related to this status. The status that can be gained from interscholastic school sport participation is thus likely to depend on the culturally determined social functioning of American interscholastic school sports and is not expected in the Dutch context.

Eligibility

One of the most prominent 'findings' in school sport studies is the relationship between school sport participation and academic results (e.g., Barber, et al., 2001; Broh, 2002; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). This conventional wisdom is at least partly based on misinterpreting correlations for cause-and-effect relations (Brettschneider, 2001, 2007). In the USA, meeting the eligibility criteria is a prerequisite to participate in interscholastic school sports. Without good grades, students are not eligible to participate in interscholastic school sports, ergo the student-athletes who participate must have good grades (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1990). The positive correlations between interscholastic school sport participation and academic results must therefore be interpreted as selection criteria instead of effects. The idea behind these eligibility criteria in the USA is an expected trade-off between academic work and school athletics (e.g., Coleman, 1961; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). Although a negative correlation is indeed observed by some, it can be argued that these eligibility criteria can intensify the interest of the athletes in their academic achievements, since they are unable to play if they neglect their academic efforts (Stokvis, 2009).

In the Netherlands, participating in all types of school sports is open to every student, regardless of their grades. This sports-for-all ideology is partly related to the historically developed non-selective nature of interscholastic school sports in the Netherlands. Given the absence of eligibility criteria and the moderate amount of time that has to be invested in Dutch interscholastic school sports, a (positive or negative) correlation between academic work and interscholastic school sports participation is unlikely to be found in Dutch students, although research is needed to better understand such claims.

Eligibility criteria are therefore thought to be unnecessary in Dutch interscholastic school sports. The possible downside of the absence of eligibility criteria is that, unlike in the USA, interscholastic school sports participation in the

Netherlands will not serve as an incentive for students to get high grades. The correlations between interscholastic school sports participation and academic results may thus be strongly related to the specific cultural context in which the school sports take place.

Conclusion

In political rhetoric, the media and scientific literature, there seems to be little doubt about the potential of school sports for solving numerous social, psychological and educational problems of students in a great variety of contexts. Indeed, several scholars have found positive correlations between participating in school sports and solutions to some of the problems schools and students face. An essential similarity between these studies is that most of them have defined school sports as American interscholastic athletics. We hypothesised that the differences between the cultural contexts of school sports in different countries will largely determine the differences in social functioning of interscholastic school sports and the organisational relationship between school and sports. Furthermore, it was expected that the specific organisation and social functioning of interscholastic school sports were related to some of the 'effects' of school sports. These hypotheses were investigated by describing the school sports contexts in the Netherlands and the USA, before comparing them on five characteristic elements that relate to the organisational and social functioning.

By referring to the history of youth sports in both countries, we demonstrated that the cultural contexts of interscholastic competitions and tournaments in the Netherlands and the USA differ significantly. In the USA, interscholastic school sports are integrated within the educational system and have a strong social functioning, whereas club sports are dominant in the Netherlands. These different cultural contexts have a significant influence on the organisation and social functioning of interscholastic school sports in both countries. This conclusion is based on the differences between the USA and the Netherlands in the competitiveness, intensity and prestige of interscholastic school sports, the status that student-athletes can derive from school sports and the use of eligibility criteria. Furthermore, it was concluded that some elements of the specific American organisational structure and social functioning of interscholastic school sports were of influence on the correlation between school sports and school bonding, self-esteem, behavioural changes and academic achievements. As these organisational structures and social functioning of interscholastic school sports are different in countries with a different cultural context of school sports, generalisations of the 'effects' of school

sports should be made carefully.

The cultural context of school sports is largely formed by the historical relationship between school and sports. Therefore, changes in the cultural context take time. Specifically, the inflexibility of the cultural context of school sports leaves little room for changes in the organisational structure and social functioning. More competitive and intensive school sports in the Netherlands would, for instance, conflict with the dominant organisational structure of club sports. Also, the dominance of club sports and insignificant history of school sports prevent school sports participants and schools gaining status and prestige from participating in interscholastic school sports. Furthermore, because of the low intensity and significance of interscholastic school sports in the Netherlands, eligibility criteria are unnecessary.

Despite efforts to import some organisational elements of American school sports in the Netherlands (such as sport campuses and interscholastic competitions), it can be concluded that the organisational relationship between school and sports in terms of curricular or extracurricular activities is very much constrained by the cultural context of (school) sports in the Netherlands. In addition, the cultural context of school sports in the Netherlands largely determines the social functioning of school sports in the sports and school community. It is therefore unlikely that the same 'effects' of school sports that have been observed in the USA will be demonstrated in the Netherlands.

Although interscholastic competitions and tournaments in the Netherlands and the USA were used as an example in this chapter, it can be concluded in general that the cultural context of school sports is of influence on the way school sports are organised, how school sports function in the school and what the possible effects of school sports are (Kay, 2009). However, within most scientific research and policy on school sports, there is insufficient awareness of this influence of the cultural context on the potential outcomes of school sports. This is illustrated by the fact that studies on American school sports have been used to underpin the expectations of Dutch school sports policies (Ministry of VWS, 2008a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008; Stegeman, 2007). Ignoring the influence of the cultural context of school sports may result in an overestimation of the potential of school sports in countries that have a sports culture with little emphasis on school sports. The cultural context of school sports is essential when discussing, investigating and setting expectations of school sports in different countries.

Chapter 7

Participation in sporting clubs located on the school campus

Based on:

Pot, N. & Hilvoorde, I. van (2013). Participation in sporting clubs located on the school campus. Is it different to playing sport at other sporting clubs? *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 10(4), 365-381.

Introduction

In the Netherlands, government regulations suggest that the relationship between school and sport can influence a child's level of school bonding and sport participation (Ministry of VWS, 2008a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008). These beliefs were at least partly based on studies examining participation in American high school sports, with results showing that increased participation correlated with many beneficial outcomes including increased school bonding (e.g., Jordan, 1999; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003), increased (long-term) sport participation (e.g., Curtis, et al., 1999), reduced school dropout rates (e.g., Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; McNeal, 1995), higher grades (e.g., Barber, et al., 2001; Broh, 2002; Lipscomb, 2007; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003) and increased self-esteem (e.g., Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Importantly, in the USA competitive sports are explicitly integrated into the educational system and sport facilities at a school's campuses are commonly used for curricular and extracurricular activities (Gems & Pfister, 2009; Mandell, 1984). As a result, interscholastic sports form an integral part of the social life of students at high schools (Gems & Pfister, 2009; Mandell, 1984). The connection between sport and the school is, for example, expressed by the sporting teams carrying the school's name, and the involvement of other students in (non-playing) roles associated with the sporting competition, for instance as members of the school band or pep-rallies (Gems & Pfister, 2009; Stokvis, 2009). This clear integration of sport into the American high school system may at least in part explain why participation in school sport in the USA is associated with students developing a strong bond with the school (e.g., Jordan, 1999; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). In addition, the mere presence of sport in American high schools may explain the relation with long-term engagement in sport (e.g., Curtis, et al., 1999) as socialisation in sports at a young age is important for long-term sport engagement (e.g., Birchwood, et al., 2008; Scheerder, et al., 2006). Several scholars have suggested that the formation of student identity and sport identity is involved in these processes (e.g., Brewer, et al., 1993; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; Sturm, et al., 2011).

In contrast to the USA, in many Western European countries like the Netherlands, sport has typically remained outside of the educational system (Curry & Weiss, 1989; Hilvoorde, et al., 2010; Stokvis, 2009). Although the integration between high schools (for secondary education) and sports have emerged in the last few decades, most children in these Western European countries play sports in sporting clubs that act independently from the school system (Bottenburg, et al., 2005; Scheerder & Breedveld, 2004). For instance, a representative survey of students in secondary education in the Netherlands showed that 71% of students

participated in sports at sporting clubs that were independent from schools while only 22% participated in school sports (Stuij, et al., 2011). In that study, school sports were defined as extra-curricular sport events that were organised under the supervision of the school, such as a sport tournament against other schools, or sport on the school campus. Also, the amount of time the students in the study of Stuij et al. (2011) spent in these sporting contexts differed considerably, with an average of 157 minutes per week spent in club sports and only 18 minutes per week in school sport (Stuij, et al., 2011). This large discrepancy is likely to be a result of the low frequency of school sport events in the Netherlands which are mostly limited to a few days per year. In addition, the low frequency and intensity of school sports may be related to the fact that sports practiced at clubs are considered more important for students compared to school sports. Evidently, the contextual setting of (extracurricular) school sports are very different in the USA and the Netherlands, both in how they are organised, and in the social function they play in the school and sporting communities (Pot & Hilvoorde, 2013).

Although sport participation among Dutch youth is relatively high in general (Breedveld & Hoekman, 2011), recent Dutch policy has sought to further increase youth sport participation and to strengthen students' commitment to their school and school-work (Ministry of VWS, 2008a, 2011a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008). The integration between sports and schools were considered a good means to achieve these goals, as policy-makers claimed that "...sport and exercise at school will cause better school results and decrease school drop-out" (Ministry of VWS, 2008a, p. 2) and "Sport can contribute to the bond that children have with their school" (Ministry of VWS, 2008a, p. 4). Furthermore, (school) sports were suggested in policy to contribute to the "motor, social and cognitive development of children" (Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008, p. 1) and an "active and healthy lifestyle" (Ministry of VWS, 2008a, p. 2). These expectations were based on (mainly) American studies on school sports (Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008) and stimulated the Dutch government to endorse all kinds of collaborations between schools and sporting organisations, clubs and associations that developed during the last decade (Ministry of VWS, 2008a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008). Examples of these collaborations are small-scaled local school sport tournaments, interscholastic competitions, and sport campuses where schools and sporting clubs reside together. Most of these school and sport initiatives in the Netherlands focus on schools providing lower level secondary education in neighbourhoods with a lower socioeconomic status. This focus was chosen because Dutch people with a low level of income and education tend to have a lower than average level of participation in sports (Tiessen-Raaphorst, Verbeek, Haan, & Breedveld, 2010;

Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010). A similar pattern can be found in other European countries (e.g., Scheerder & Vos, 2011; Studer, Schlesinger, & Engel, 2011).

It is most likely that the Dutch government used American studies to inform their school sport policy simply because the majority of studies considering school and sports have been conducted in the USA. In Europe, this field of study has received little attention, which can at least partly be explained by the dominance of club sports in most Western European countries. Now that the integration between school and sport is on a rise in Europe, it is important to improve the knowledge base about these collaborations and their relationship with school bonding and long-term sport engagement in contexts where school sport does not have a strong tradition.

Sport campuses in the Netherlands

The present study focussed on the relationship between playing sport at a sport campus in the Netherlands and the level of school bonding and long-term sport engagement experienced by students. These sporting campuses are venues at which schools and regular sporting clubs share the same location and facilities. Similar to sporting clubs which are not located on these campuses, sporting clubs located on the campus are organised independently of the school and are open to everybody. Most schools do not use the sport facilities at their campus for curricular or extra-curricular activities, with the exception of gymnastics halls, which are sometimes used for physical education lessons. Therefore, the only difference between sporting clubs on or outside of a campus is the location of the sporting facilities relative to the school. This is in clear contrast to the USA, where sports on the campus (often) form an integral part of the curricular and extra-curricular program and social life of the school (Gems & Pfister, 2009; Mandell, 1984). Because of this contrast, the focus on sport campuses was chosen in the present study. In the Netherlands, club sports are clearly involved in these sporting clubs at a campus and the interaction with schools is minimal. Despite these differences, policy-makers in the Netherlands appear to expect that playing sports at a sporting club located on a campus will increase school bonding and the (long-term) sport participation of students, similar to the results found in American studies (Ministry of VWS, 2008a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008).

The policy documents (Ministry of VWS, 2008a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008) do not give a clear outline of the expected relationship between playing sports at a school campus and the outcomes described in these policy documents. However, we can hypothesise about the mechanisms behind this

presumed relationship. Research has shown that good sporting facilities in the vicinity of a school are positively correlated with the physical activity level of students (e.g., Sallis, et al., 2001; Taylor, et al., 2011). This stimulating school environment may enhance the enjoyment students experience by playing sport on their school's campus (Stuij, et al., 2011). Also, the absence of time and travel barriers that can withhold students from participating in sporting clubs located elsewhere (Humbert, et al., 2006), may stimulate sport participation and the positive feeling about their campus (which includes their school). As a result, it can be hypothesised that sport campuses in the Netherlands may lead to increased school bonding in addition to sport participation.

Although a number of studies have examined the influence of sporting facilities on sport participation (e.g., Limstrand, 2008; Sallis, et al., 2001; Wicker, Breuer, & Pawlowski, 2009), no studies have considered whether the proximity of schools to sporting facilities is sufficient to enhance school bonding and long-term sport engagement. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate whether the relationship between sport participation, school bonding and long-term sport engagement is modulated by the location of the sporting club (either on or off campus) in a context where club sport is dominant and the school sport culture is different from the USA. This was investigated by comparing students from two schools in secondary school education who either (i) do not play sport at all, (ii) play sport on their school campus, and (iii) attend the same school but play sport at other clubs not located on the campus. This research design provides insight into the possible role of the location of the sporting club while controlling for the potential influence of the very act of playing sports, by including students who do not play sport. Further, the possible influence of the school's social and physical environment was equal for all groups, as all respondents were from the same campus.

School bonding and sport participation as identity processes

As mentioned in the introduction, identity formation may explain the possible influence of school sports on school bonding and long-term sport engagement (Brettschneider, 2001; Brewer, et al., 1993; Lau, Fox, & Cheung, 2004; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; Sturm, et al., 2011; Weiss, 2001). Drawing on identity theory, the identity of an individual can be seen as a multidimensional construct (e.g., Burke & Stets, 2009; Marsh, Perry, Horsely, & Roche, 1995; Stryker & Burke, 2000). The multiple identities that form the self-concept (e.g., sportsman, brother, student) are influenced and shaped by the different social contexts one is involved in

(e.g., sporting clubs, family, school). These identities form a salience hierarchy; an identity placed higher in the hierarchy is more likely to be displayed in different situations, together with its related behaviour, attitudes and values (Abbott, Weinmann, Bailey, & Laguna, 1999; Burke & Stets, 2009; Miller, 2009; Stryker, 1968; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Most adolescents hold multiple identities that are related to different social contexts they are involved in, such as with family, friends, romantic relationships, religion, school and sports (Cieslak, 2004). It is important to distinguish between the strength of an identity and the relative salience of an identity compared to other identities (e.g., Cieslak, 2004). For example, two students actively engaged in sport might have a sporting identity of similar strength, but a religious student might rank his or her religious identity highest, whereas a non-religious student might rank his or her sport identity highest (Curry & Parr, 1988). In the process of self-concept formation, adolescents learn to negotiate between these different identities (Bradley, 1996; Gambone, Yu, Lewis-Charp, Sipe, & Lacoë, 2006). This negotiation process is influenced by the level of involvement in different social contexts (Banbery, Groves, & Biscoomb, 2012; Burke & Stets, 2009). Being intensively involved in a certain context may increase both the strength and salience of identities related to that context (Burke & Stets, 2009). This may explain the American research findings indicating that participation in school sports is related to student identity and sport identity (e.g., Brewer, et al., 1993; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; Sturm, et al., 2011).

The student identity can be considered an indication of the bonding of students to their school and their willingness to invest in their school work (Libbey, 2004; Osborne & Jones, 2011; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005). Sport identity can be defined as “the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role” (Brewer, et al., 1993, p. 237) and is an important determinant in long-term sport engagement (Curtis, et al., 1999; Downs & Ashton, 2011; Lau, et al., 2006).

Research has indicated that there are differences in sport-related identity formation between American and European adolescents (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Brettschneider, 1997; Curry & Weiss, 1989). This may have to do with the different cultural emphasis on sports and the differences in the way youth sport is organised. More specifically, in the Netherlands, some studies have indicated that sporting club membership influences the formation of identities related to sports (e.g., Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009). However, in contrast to American studies, no European studies have investigated the relationship between sport participation (either intra or extra-curricular) and student identity. This may be explained by the low integration of sports into the European educational system. Given the vast differences between the organisation and social functioning of youth sport in

the USA and European countries, and therefore the lack of contextually relevant research, this study sought to investigate how sport participation at a school campus might be different from sport participation at other locations in the Netherlands.

Although identity processes in Dutch sporting clubs might be different from those reported in American school sports, it can be hypothesised that participation in Dutch sporting clubs also affects identity processes. Therefore in the present study the student identity of students was used as an indication of school bonding. Sport identity was used as an indication of (the chances of) long-term sport engagement, as it was impossible to determine the actual long-term sport engagement of the students within the time-frame of this study.

As a result we sought to address the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between club sport participation and the strength and salience of student identity in the Netherlands?
2. Is there a relationship between club sport participation and the strength and salience of sport identity in the Netherlands?
3. Are these relationships influenced by whether the sporting club is co-located with a school campus?

Method

Research setting

The study was conducted at two schools co-located with a sporting campus in the Netherlands. One school provided preparation for vocational education and the other provided vocational education. Both schools were located in the same building which was built in the middle of existing football and baseball clubs. After the school opened, several other sporting clubs commenced activities at the campus, including gymnastics, fitness, beach volleyball and field hockey clubs. Although the campus was located in a neighbourhood with a low socioeconomic status, the population of the sporting clubs consisted of people from a broad cross-section of different ages, ethnic origins, educational levels and SES.

Even though the schools and the sporting clubs were located on the same campus, sport was not integrated into the curricular or extracurricular activities of the schools.

Respondents

One-hundred and fifty students of the schools on the campus participated in the study. Six respondents were excluded because they did not adequately complete

the questionnaire. Another four respondents were involved in sporting clubs both on and away from the campus. Because this group was too small to include in the analysis, they were excluded. The remaining 140 students were divided into three groups based on their self-reported sport participation.

The first group consisted of students who did not participate in any form of sport (NS). This group consisted of eight male and 20 female participants with a mean (standard deviation in parenthesis) age of 15.88 (1.90). Twenty-one of these students were of foreign ethnic origin.

The second group consisted of students who participated in one of the sporting clubs located on the campus (SCC) ($n = 37$). Most of the respondents in this group were members of one of the fitness clubs ($n = 10$) or the football club on campus ($n = 15$). This group consisted of 23 male and 14 female participants with a mean age of 16.57 (1.48). Twenty students in this group were of foreign ethnic origin.

The third group consisted of students who exclusively played sports at other sporting clubs (OSC) not located on the campus ($n = 75$). This group consisted of 53 male and 22 female participants with a mean age of 16.54 (1.58). Twenty-five of these students were of foreign ethnic origin.

The proportions of male and female subjects ($\chi^2(2) = 15.151; p < 0.01$) and the proportion of students from Dutch and foreign ethnic origin ($\chi^2(2) = 15.169; p < 0.01$) were unequally divided across the groups. Therefore, sex and ethnic origin were controlled for in the statistical analysis.

Procedure

Students from six different classes were recruited by their PE teacher to participate in the study. This selection was based on the teaching schedule of the PE teacher, as it was the six classes the teacher had to teach on the day of the data collection. Therefore, the characteristics of the students did not play a role in selecting the respondents. The students were informed about the content and procedure of the study at the beginning of their lesson, after which they could sign an informed consent form. None of the students refused to participate. After giving their written consent, the students were asked to fill out a questionnaire. Data collection was performed by students from the School of Human Movement and Sports (Windesheim University of Applied Sciences) as part of a social and cultural exchange event. These students were instructed by the first author about the purpose and procedure of the data collection. Upon completion of the questionnaires, the students from the School of Human Movement and Sports provided a physical education lesson for the respondents. Because privacy regulations prevented the

collection of school population data, the PE teacher was asked to indicate whether the respondents in the study formed a representative sample. He estimated the respondents to be typical for the overall school population ($n = \pm 600$) in terms of ethnic origin, sex and age.

Measures

The questionnaire contained questions about the demographic background of the respondents, their engagement in sports and physical activities, student and sport identity, and the salience of different role-identities.

Student identity

Student identity was operationalised as the sense of school membership that students experienced (Libbey, 2004) and was measured by the mean of a four-item adaptation of the Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) (Goodenow, 1993). This adaptation included items such as: "I feel like a real part of my school" and "I am included in lots of activities at my school" and had a good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.84$). These questions had to be answered on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "totally not true" to "totally true". The PSSM was originally created for health practitioners to assess school membership, but was considered valid and reliable to measure the importance of school and school work for healthy high school students from a large variety of backgrounds (e.g., Goodenow, 1993; You, Ritchey, Furlong, Shochet, & Boman, 2011).

Sport identity

The sport identity of the students was measured using the mean of a five-item adaptation of the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) (Brewer, et al., 1993). This adaptation had a good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.91$). Although the AIMS was originally validated for college athletes and non-athletic college students (Brewer, et al., 1993), it has been validated to measure the role of sports in the life of athletes in different levels of competition, ranging from non-athletes and beginners to elite athletes (Cieslak, 2004). In addition, the AIMS has been used on younger children (Lau, et al., 2004, 2006).

Because 'athlete' in the Netherlands refers to a participant in track and field, the term 'athlete' was replaced by 'sport' in the questionnaire (see also Lau, et al., 2004). The scale included items such as "I consider myself a sportsman" and "Sport is the most important part of my life". These items had to be answered on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "totally disagree" to "totally agree".

A potential drawback of the PSSM and the AIMS is that they pretend to measure a single identity in isolation (Cieslak, 2004), whereas for most people different identities interact and interfere (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Identity salience hierarchy

The salience hierarchy of six different role-identities was measured by letting the respondents award a maximum of 100 points to each of the following six role-identities: family, friend, lover, religion, student, and sport (Cieslak, 2004). This method was proposed by Curry and Weaner (1987) in order to assess the relative importance of different identities that might be important to students. This method was previously found to have strong reliability ($\alpha = 0.90$) (Curry & Weaner, 1987).

Statistical Analysis

One-way analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were used to compare the mean values of student identity and sport identity for the three groups. Sex and ethnic origin (dichotomised in Dutch or foreign) were found to be unequally distributed across the different groups and therefore could potentially confound the results (Field, 2009). In order to remove the possible bias of these variables, they were added as covariates to the ANCOVAs. Given the similarity of the levels and environments of the two schools, school was not considered to be a confounding variable and the students of the two schools were treated the same in the analysis. To compare the three sport participation groups, post hoc analyses were conducted. All analyses were performed using SPSS (version 17.0). Significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Student identity

Students who played sports at a SCC did not differ significantly in their student identity ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.55$, 95% CI [3.49-3.94]) from students who played at OSC ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.71$, 95% CI [3.63-3.95]) and students who did not play sports at all ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.70$, 95% CI [3.19-3.74]) after controlling for sex and ethnic origin ($F(2, 133) = 1.923$, *ns*). In addition, there were no significant differences in the student identity of students who played at OSC, 95% CI [3.63-3.95], and students who did not play sports at all, 95% CI [3.19-3.74] (see Table 7.1). This means that the very act of playing sports was not related to the student identity, as students who participated in sport did not differ from the non-sporting students in their student identity. Furthermore, the location of the sporting club, either at the campus or

not, was not related to the importance of school and school work.

Table 7.1: Means, (standard deviation) and [95% confidence interval] for student and sport identity scores of three groups of students (NS = No Sports; SCC = Sporting clubs at the Campus; OSC = Other Sporting clubs).

	Student Identity	Sport Identity
NS ($n = 28$)	3.43 (0.70) [3.19-3.74]	3.21 (1.39) [2.93-3.87]*†
SCC ($n = 37$)	3.71 (0.55) [3.49-3.94]	4.89 (1.29) [4.47-5.23]*
OSC ($n = 75$)	3.81 (0.71) [3.63-3.95]	5.26 (1.07) [4.93-5.48]†

Note. * and † indicate significantly different means at $p < 0.001$.

Sport identity

The ANCOVA on sport identity revealed a significant main effect of sporting club participation after controlling for the influence of sex and ethnic origin ($F(2, 133) = 20.042, p < 0.001$) (see Table 7.1). Planned contrasts revealed that students who participated in OSC ($M = 5.26, SD = 1.07$) ($p < 0.001, 95\% CI [4.93-5.48]$) and students who played at SCC ($M = 4.87, SD = 1.29$) ($p < 0.001, 95\% CI [4.47-5.23]$) had a significantly higher sport identity compared with students who did not play sport at all ($M = 3.21, SD = 1.39$) ($95\% CI [2.93-3.87]$). There were no significant differences between students who participated in SCC and OSC. This indicates that playing sports was related to a stronger sport identity, as students participating in sports had a stronger sport identity compared to students not participating. However, the location of the sporting club was not important for the significance of sport in the lives of students, since students participating in SCC did not differ in their sport identity from students participating in OSC.

Identity salience hierarchy

Table 7.2 shows the salience hierarchy for the six different role-identities across the three groups of students. For students who did not play sports at all, sport identity was ranked as the identity with the lowest importance. On average, students who played sports at a SCC or an OSC ranked their sport identity in fourth place. This means that students who were engaged in sports considered sports to be relatively important for their self-concept compared to other social identities. All groups ranked their student identity third. This indicates that playing sports, regardless of the location, was unrelated to the relative importance of the student identity.

Table 7.2: Mean rank order of role-identity salience of the three groups of respondents ($n = 140$).

	No Sport	Sporting clubs at the Campus	Other Sporting clubs
1	Family	Family	Family
2	Religion	Friend	Friend
3	Student	Student	Student
4	Friend	Sport	Sport
5	Lover	Lover	Lover
6	Sport	Religion	Religion

Interestingly, students who did not participate in sports ranked their religious identity relatively high compared to the sporting students. This is in line with a previous study on the sport identity of religious students, showing a relative importance of religion for religious college students (Curry & Parr, 1988). In the present study, this finding could be explained by the high percentage of female students with non-western ethnic backgrounds (75%) in this group. Research indicated that this demographic of female students are known for their low levels of sport participation, while also placing relatively high importance on religion (e.g., Knop, Theeboom, Wittock, & Martelaer, 1996).

Discussion and conclusion

Dutch policy-makers suggested that the integration between school and sport is related to the level of school bonding and long-term sport engagement experienced by school students (Ministry of VWS, 2008a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008). They substantiated these claims by citing American studies that examined interscholastic school sports. As the social functioning and organisation of school sport in the Netherlands and other European countries differs markedly from that in America, there is a lack of contextually relevant research on school sports in Europe. Therefore, the present study was conducted to give some insight in the relationship between sport participation, school bonding and long-term sport engagement in the Netherlands. In addition, it was questioned whether this possible relationship was different for students playing sports in the same location as the school or at another different location. These questions were investigated by comparing the student identity and sport identity of students not playing sports at all (NS), students playing sports at sporting clubs at a campus (SCC), and students playing sports at sporting clubs located elsewhere (OSC).

The three groups of respondents in this study did not differ in their student identity. Further, in the salience hierarchy there were no differences in the importance of the student identity between the three groups. These results show that involvement in sports per se, either on the school campus or at another location, cannot be associated with the strength and salience of the student identity. Since student identity was used as a measure of school bonding in this study, these results suggest that playing sports, either on the campus or at other sporting clubs, is not related to school bonding. This is in clear contrast to Dutch sports policy that suggests that locating sport and school facilities on the same campus should be related to school bonding and a stronger emphasis on school and school work. This expectation was based on American studies showing a relationship between school sport participation and school bonding (e.g., Jordan, 1999; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). The differences between the present findings and those from the USA might be explained by the specific organisational structure and social functioning of school sports in American high schools (Pot & Hilvoorde, 2013). The present results suggest that the mere proximity of a school and sporting facilities in the Netherlands is not enough to facilitate enhanced school bonding.

The results showed that sport involvement was related to a strong sport identity. However, no differences in sport identity were found between students involved in SCC and students involved in OSC. Also, in the salience hierarchy students engaged in SCNC and OSC ranked their sport identity higher than students who were not involved in sports. The correlation between sport participation and a strong sport identity is in agreement with earlier findings (e.g., Brewer, et al., 1993; Cieslak, 2004; Lau, et al., 2004; Sturm, et al., 2011). The absence of differences in the sport identity of students involved in SCC and OSC is also consistent with a previous study (Lau, et al., 2004) that found no relationship between sport identity and the sporting environment of the school (including the proximity of the school to sporting facilities). This means that the location where sport participation takes place, be it on the campus or not, was not related to the centrality of sport in the lives of the students. Since sport identity was used as an indication of the chances of long-term sport engagement, the present results suggest that playing sports on the campus was not differently related to long-term engagement in sports compared with playing sports at other sporting clubs. However, it could be that the sporting facilities on the campus convinced some students to start participating in sports, as they would otherwise have been discouraged by the time investment needed to travel to another sporting club located away from their school (and home) (e.g., Humbert, et al., 2006). This might particularly be the case in neighbourhoods with a lower socioeconomic status as sport participation

rates tend to be lower in those neighbourhoods (Tiessen-Raaphorst, et al., 2010; Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010). Future research on the motivations for participating in these sporting clubs on the campus could help to test this hypothesis.

In summary, the strength and salience of sport identity was related to participation in sporting clubs, whereas student identity was not. In addition, the location of the sporting clubs, either on or away from the school campus, did not affect this relationship.

As the nature of the present study was cross-sectional, no causal relationships could be established. In addition, the small sample of students from one campus limits the possibilities for generalisation of the conclusions. However, the findings give some insight into sport participation and the location of sporting clubs, and their collective relationship with school bonding and (long-term) sport participation. Our findings question the policy expectations (Ministry of VWS, 2008a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008) that the mere proximity of sporting facilities to a school is in itself sufficient for sporting clubs on a campus to have outcomes above and beyond those possible from sports clubs not located on campus. It is therefore suggested that other elements of school sports, such as the integration of sports within the curricular or extracurricular program, and the social functioning of school sports, might be crucial for sports to have an impact on the level of school bonding similar to that found in American studies (e.g., Jordan, 1999; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). The Dutch policy-makers appear to neglect the absence of these other elements of American school sports by basing their expectation of the collaborations between school and sports in the Netherlands on American studies on interscholastic school sports. It could even be argued that the collaborations between school and sport in the Netherlands cannot be defined as school sports, as most of them are interwoven into the club sport system.

However, the integration between school and sport in the Netherlands, and the infrastructure that emerged simultaneously, do appear to offer possibilities for more interaction between school and sport by encouraging more engagement of schools in sport events and a stronger integration of sports into the school curriculum. This could enhance the future chances of realising school-related outcomes from these collaborations including enhanced school bonding, greater investment in school work, decreased drop-out rates, and they might convince some student to start playing sports.

In conclusion, on-campus sporting clubs in the Netherlands should be regarded as regular sporting clubs that 'happen to be' at the school campus. They do not seem to provide any particular advantage in terms of school bonding or long-term sport engagement when compared to other sporting clubs.

Chapter 8

School sports and identity formation: socialisation or selection?

Based on:

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Introduction

It seems common knowledge that sports and physical activity lead to all kinds of beneficial academic, social, psychological and health outcomes (Bailey, 2006; Coakley, 2009; Green, 2012; Hartmann, 2008; Lau, et al., 2004; Lubans & Morgan, 2008). Although the definition of school sports is influenced by the cultural context (Pot & Hilvoorde, 2013), it can be understood as extra-curricular sport competitions or tournaments that are organised under the supervision or in collaboration with schools.

In most of these studies and in many policy documents on (school) sports (e.g., European Commission, 2011; Ministry of VWS, 2011a), it is suggested that participation in school sports causes the effects mentioned before. In other words, school sports participation is often regarded as a socialising activity. However, it may also be that students with a certain predisposition are more inclined to participate in school sports and that the social, psychological, health and academic differences that have been linked to school sport participation were already present before the students started to participate, implying a selection effect.

Hitherto, most studies investigating the relationship between sport participation and the outcomes mentioned before were cross-sectional in nature, which is seen as a major methodological limitation (e.g., Bailey, 2006; Green, 2012; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). When using cross-sectional designs it is impossible to determine whether sport participation is actually associated with changes in the development of children (socialisation hypothesis), or whether children with a certain predisposition are more inclined to participate in (school) sports (selection hypothesis) (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Brettschneider, 1997).

Although still relatively little is known about how sport participation could be related to the before mentioned outcomes (Bailey, et al., 2009; Hartmann, Sullivan, & Nelson, 2012; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003), it has been suggested that sport identity and student identity mediate the relationship between school sport participation and the outcomes described (e.g., Brewer, et al., 1993; Lau, et al., 2004, 2006; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). In this paper, we focussed on the relationship between school sport participation and changes in the mediating variables student identity and sport identity. Although it can be expected that changes in these mediating variables are related to changes in some of the outcomes described (e.g., Lau, et al., 2006), we do not focus on the relationship between the mediating variables and the various outcomes in the present study.

Sport identity can be defined as the degree to which sport plays a part in the life of an individual (Brewer, et al., 1993) and is considered an important factor in making sport related choices (Lau, et al., 2010; Wright & Laverty, 2010). Many studies reported a positive relationship between sport participation and sport identity (Barber, et al., 2001; Brandl-Bredenbeck & Brettschneider, 1997; Curry & Weaner, 1987; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Lau, et al., 2006; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; Weiss, 2001). This pattern was found for both sexes, although boys have a stronger sport identity on average (Brewer, et al., 1993). It is conceived that sport identity is shaped by life experiences, as well as socio-cultural predispositions, sometimes referred to as sports habitus (e.g., Brewer, et al., 1993; Wheeler, 2012; Wright & Laverty, 2010). Sports habitus can be defined as a set of (inherited) dispositions, which (unconsciously) influence perceptions, actions, values and judgements (Bourdieu, 1984). Since habitus has an influence on identity (e.g., Wright & Laverty, 2010; Zevenbergen, 2006), it could be that children with a predisposed sports habitus already developed their sport identity and are therefore more inclined to participate in school sports. This would argue in favour of the selection hypothesis. However, sport identity can also be influenced by life experiences (e.g., Wright & Laverty, 2010), which would suggest that school sport participation might influence the sport identity of participating children. This would indicate a socialisation process.

In addition to sport identity, it has been suggested that enhanced identification with the school through school sport participation may explain the positive relationship between school sport participation and academic outcomes, such as higher grades and test scores, time investment in homework and academic ambitions (e.g., Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; Stokvis, 2009).

The purpose of the present study was to investigate whether or not participation in a one year school sport competition was related to changes in the sport identity and student identity, using a longitudinal design. Because it is widely believed that school sport participation has socialising effects (e.g., European Commission, 2011; Ministry of VWS, 2011a), we hypothesised that participants in the school sport competition showed an increase in their student identity and sport identity, whereas non-participants did not.

Methods

Research setting

The study was conducted during a one-year school sport competition for elementary schools in Amsterdam (the Netherlands), which was organised by the Dutch Football Association (KNVB) and the local government. Because of historical reasons that are beyond the scope of this paper, school sports are not very common in the Netherlands and the majority of the youth participates in sporting clubs that are independent of the schools (Pot & Hilvoorde, 2013; Stokvis, 2009). Therefore, this school sport competition was a relatively new phenomenon in the Netherlands.

The present study was conducted in the school year 2010-2011. Eleven out of the 16 schools in the borough participated with at least one team. The students from the seventh and eighth grade (10-12 years old) of the elementary schools that participated were free to choose whether or not to participate.

The students that participated played indoor football once a week in a sports hall in the middle of the borough. Students from one school teamed up against teams from other schools, playing with the school's name as their team name. Boys and girls played on separate days. The teams were tutored by coaches (16-23 years old) from the same neighbourhood.

Design, recruitment and respondents

A pre-test/re-test/post-test design was used to study possible changes in the student identity and sport identity during the competition. The procedure was in agreement with the ethical standards of the Faculty of Human Movement Sciences (VU University). All 11 participating schools were contacted to take part in the study, on which five schools agreed to do so. All students of grades seven and eight of these five schools volunteered to fill out a questionnaire at the beginning of the school year in September 2010 before the start of the competition (T0), during the competition in February 2011 (T1) and after the end of the competition in June 2011 (T2). A passive consent procedure (Gortmaker, et al., 1999) was used in which all teachers of the participating students received letters which they distributed to the parents of the students. These letters explained the study and could be signed and returned if they did not want their child to participate. No letters were returned. The questionnaires were completed at school during normal class hours. One of the researchers explained the objective of the study and gave a verbal instruction about the questionnaire. During the completion of the questionnaires, students were allowed to ask questions.

A total of 304 students participated in the study. Thirty-eight percent (115) of the students filled in a questionnaire on all three, and 36% (110) on two of three time points. Although non-random attrition cannot be ruled out entirely, sensitivity analyses indicated that dropout was not related to student identity, sport identity, or physical activity. Non-participation at T1 and T2 was mainly due to one school not willing to participate at T1 and mutations in class formation.

Measures

The questionnaires contained questions about the demographic background of the respondents, participation in club and school sports, and student identity and sport identity. Some of the validated questionnaires were adapted to fit the level of understanding and attention of the respondents.

(School) sport participation

At T0, the competition was not started and hence, no student participated in school sports. At T1 and T2, students could indicate whether they still participated, did not participate or dropped out of the competition. Some students were (also) involved in club sports. Therefore, students were also asked to indicate whether they were a member of a sports club. This resulted in six groups of respondents: no sports; school sports; club sports; school and club sports; dropped out of school sports; club sports and dropped out of school sports.

Student identity

The student identity was measured as the sense of school membership that students experienced (Libbey, 2004). The mean of a two items from the Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM, five point scale, ranging from “totally not true” to “totally true”) was used to measure the student identity (Goodenow, 1993). The original 18-item PSSM was created for health care practitioners to measure the “extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school environment” (Goodenow, 1993, p. 80). It has been found reliable for elementary and secondary school samples of diverse backgrounds (You, et al., 2011). In addition, it has been validated with other health and educational scales (for an overview see You, et al., 2011). The complete PSSM would have been too long to complete for the young respondents in the present study, given the fact that it was part of a larger questionnaire measuring several other constructs. Therefore two items were selected: “I feel like a real part of my school” and “I feel proud of belonging to my school”. These items were selected because they both loaded on two of the three factors of the PSSM

(You, et al., 2011). This adaptation had a fair internal consistency ($\alpha = .76$).

Sport identity

The sport identity of the students was measured using the mean of a five item adaptation of the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS, seven point scale) (Brewer, et al., 1993) with a fair internal consistency ($\alpha = .78$). Originally, the AIMS was created to measure the sport identity of college athletes and non-athletic college students (Brewer, et al., 1993). However, it has been validated for elementary school children (Lau, et al., 2004, 2006) and for persons playing in different levels of competition, ranging from non-athletes and beginners to elite athletes (Cieslak, 2004). An adaptation of the original 10-item scale had to be made, because the attention span of the young respondents did not allow for the usage of the complete AIMS.

Since 'athlete' in Europe refers to a participant in track and field, the term 'sport identity' was used (cf. Lau, et al., 2004). The scale included items such as "I consider myself a sportsman" and "Sport is the most important part of my life". These items had to be answered on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "totally not agree" to "totally agree".

Physical activity

In order to check whether participation in the school sport competition was related to higher physical activity, the participants reported their physical activity using the Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity measure (MVPA, eight point scale) (Prochaska, Sallis, & Long, 2001). The mean of two items asking how many days in a typical week and the last week the students were engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity (at least 60 minutes per day) was used as a measure of the physical activity of the students ($\alpha = .83$).

Statistical Analysis

In order to determine whether school sports participation was associated with an increase in sports and/or student identity, fixed effects regression models were estimated. Such models estimate how time-varying characteristics of students are associated with within-student changes in the dependent variables over time. This implies that respondents serve as their own controls; all time-constant differences between respondents are automatically controlled for. The coefficients can only be interpreted as estimates of how changes in independent variables are associated with changed in school and sport identity. The estimated models do not (and cannot) include characteristics that do not vary or hardly vary over time such as

differences in socio-economic status of the parents or ethnicity. We do however estimate our models separately for boys and girls. This is done because previous studies showed sex differences in both student identity and sport identity (e.g., Brewer, et al., 1993; Goodenow, 1993).

Results

Table 8.1a contains descriptives of students' student identity, sport identity and physical activity scores at baseline for boys and Table 8.1b for girls. We distinguish between students that participated but dropped out before the end of the tournament, and those that participated for the full length of the competition.

Table 8.1a: Mean values at baseline with standard deviation of student identity (PSSM), sport identity (AIMS) and physical activity (PA) scores for boys by type of participation in school sports competition.

	Boys (N = 159)		
	No part (77%)	Did part (8%)	Full part (14%)
PSSM	4.16 ± 0.91	3.96 ± 1.17	3.67 ± 1.27
AIMS	5.14 ± 1.17	5.15 ± 1.12	5.64 ± 1.00
PA	4.21 ± 1.77	5.17 ± 1.48	5.01 ± 1.90

Table 8.1b: Mean values at baseline with standard deviation of student identity (PSSM), sport identity (AIMS) and physical activity (PA) scores for girls by type of participation in school sports competition.

	Girls (N = 145)		
	No part (87%)	Did part (4%)	Full part (9%)
PSSM	4.26 ± 0.94	4.05 ± 1.17	4.19 ± 0.82
AIMS	4.44 ± 1.26	4.25 ± 0.97	5.08 ± 1.13
PA	3.79 ± 1.96	4.92 ± 1.95	4.41 ± 1.73

Boys that participated during the entire competition had higher levels of sport identity and somewhat lower levels of student identity at baseline compared to boys that did not participate or dropped out during the competition. Although girls participating and not dropping out in the school competition also had higher levels of sport identity at baseline, their student identity at baseline was not substantially lower compared to girls in any of the other categories. Physical activity scores at baseline were higher for both boys and girls participating in the school competition compared to those that did not. Sport identity and physical activity

scores were somewhat higher for boys compared to girls. Student identity scores at baseline did not differ substantially between boys and girls, the exception being the lower student identity for boys not dropping out of the school competition.

These differences may provide support for the selection hypothesis, as it seems that students participating in school sports had higher levels of sports identity and physical activity scores to begin with. However, the differences in these descriptive were not statistically significant. This may be due to the low power of these tests due to the relatively small number of students that participated in the entire competition, or dropped out after participating. Therefore, no conclusions can be drawn with regard to the selection hypothesis.

In the models presented next we aim to determine whether and to what extent participation in the school competition has brought about changes in sport identity and student identity. Our models are run for boys and girls separately because previous studies have indicated sex differences in both student identity and sport identity. As described in the methods section, time-constant characteristics are automatically controlled for. The only time-varying variable that we control for is time itself. This is to account for changes in sports and student identity over time that are a reflection of the students approaching their teens where other things gain in importance over sports and school.

Table 8.2: Fixed effects regression of sport identity (AIMS) on participation in school sports competition.

	Boys (N = 156)			Girls (N = 143)		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Constant	5.28	0.18	0.00	4.86	0.18	0.00
Participation						
No	Ref.			Ref.		
Yes	0.37	0.39	0.34	0.31	0.42	0.45
Drops out	-0.68	0.30	0.03	-0.77	0.45	0.10
Member of sports club	-0.07	0.21	0.73	0.07	0.23	0.75
Participation * Member						
Yes * Yes	-0.36	0.41	0.37	-0.29	0.60	0.63
Drops out * Yes	0.86	0.35	0.02	0.00	0.66	0.99
Time of measurement	-0.00	0.05	0.97	-0.19	0.06	0.00

Compared to boys not participating, boys dropping out of the school sports competition and who were not a member of a sports club scored 0.68 (95% CI = -1.29 – -0.08) lower on average on their sport identity compared to when they were still enrolled in the school competition (see Table 8.2). Such a decrease was not found for boys who were member of a sports club ($b = 0.18$, 95% CI = -0.26 – 0.62.). Note that dropping out of the school sports competition happened twice as frequent for boys from non-western origin and who attend ethnically diverse schools (13% versus 5%, $p < 0.05$).

Boys who participated for the entire duration of the school competition did not show a change in their sport identity. Becoming a member or cancelling membership of a sports club did not seem to change boys' sport identity. Girls' sport identity did not seem to change depending on whether they participated in the school sports competition or not. In contrast to boys however, their sport identity decreased somewhat during the school year, irrespective of whether they participated or not. Note that additional analyses (not shown) indicated that this decrease in sport identity was only apparent for girls from schools with a homogenous Dutch student population and not for girls from ethnically diverse schools.

Table 8.3: Fixed effects regression of student identity (PSSM) on participation in school sports competition.

	Boys ($N = 158$)			Girls ($N = 142$)		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Constant	4.69	0.24	0.00	4.87	0.16	0.00
Participation						
No	Ref.			Ref.		
Yes	0.43	0.53	0.43	-0.03	0.40	0.94
Drops out	0.20	0.37	0.60	-0.50	0.40	0.22
Member of sports club	-0.03	0.28	0.92	-0.45	0.21	0.03
Participation * Member						
Yes * Yes	-0.12	0.56	0.83	-0.79	0.57	0.17
Drops out * Yes	-0.12	0.44	0.78	1.14	0.59	0.06
Time of measurement	-0.33	0.06	0.00	-0.18	0.05	0.00

Table 8.3 shows that boys' student identity did not change depending on whether they participated in the school competition or not. The results only suggest that during the school year their student identity decreased with 0.33 (95% CI = -0.46

–0.20) at each measurement. Girls' student identity did not change significantly during the school year. The results do suggest that girls not participating in the school competition but who become a member of a sports club report lower student identity ($b = -0.45$, 95% CI = $-0.87 - -0.04$) compared to girls not participating and who do not become a member.

Discussion

In this study we investigated whether participants in a one-year school competition showed changes in their student identity and sport identity. It was expected that participants showed an increase in their sport identity and student identity, as opposed to non-participants.

The results suggest that participating in the competition was not related to changes in the sport identity for most participants. The only exception was the attenuation of the sport identity of boys who dropped out of the competition and who were not a member of a sports club. This decrease may have been caused by the experience they had during the competition that they were not as good in playing soccer or simply did not like it as much as they imagined. The students who dropped out of the competition indeed indicated that they quit because they did not like soccer after all (27%) or that they wanted to try another sport (23%). Since these boys were not actively involved in sports prior to the competition, their sport identity might have been constructed of different elements, such as watching sports, the involvement of family members in sports or the cultural expectations of boys and sport involvement. Participating in the competition might have provided a 'reality check' for their sport identity based on their actual sport involvement and was accordingly adjusted. Future research should investigate the reasons for drop-out and the attenuation of the sport identity that coincides with it. In addition, it has to be noted that most drop-outs were boys from non-western origin and who attended ethnically diverse schools. Future research should also investigate whether this demographic component is of influence on sport identity formation, since there are indications that there is a cultural component to sport identity construction (Lau, Cheung, & Ransdell, 2008).

Most participants in the competition (63% at baseline) were also a member of a sports club. This may have to do with the fact that school sports are a relatively new phenomenon in the Netherlands. Most children do not consider school sports as their sole option of sport participation. As most participants were already a member of a sports club, they probably had a more realistic image of themselves in the role of sports(woman). Being in the competition or quitting the

competition did not change their sport identity. In addition, the sport identity was also not affected by becoming a member or cancelling membership of a sports club, although this latter result might have been influenced by the low amount of changes in whether or not a student was a member of a sports club in the present sample. In summary, the lack of changes in the sport identity scores during the competition does not provide support for a socialisation effect. Furthermore, the (non-significant) differences in the sport identity of participants and non-participants at baseline seem to suggest that students are selected into participation because their predisposed habitus resulted in higher sport identities to begin with. A larger sample size is necessary to test this hypothesis.

Regarding student identity, it can be concluded that the student identity of male students, independent of their participation in the school sports competition, attenuated slightly during the course of the school year. A similar attenuation was found for girls who did not participate in the school sports competition but who became a member of a sports club. Therefore, it can be concluded that, in contrast to what was expected, we did not find that participating in this school sport competition was related to the development of the student identity. In addition, there were no indications of differences in the student identity between participants and non-participants prior to the competition. Consequently, it must be concluded that there was no relationship between school sport participation and student identity in this study. This is interesting because it is often expected that (school) sport participation leads to investments in school work (e.g., European Commission, 2011), which would have been reflected by an increase of the student identity.

The lack of a relationship between school sport participation and student identity in the present study might be explained by the cultural context of school sports in the Netherlands. In contrast to the US, where a relationship was found, school sports in the Netherlands are not very relevant to the school community (Pot & Hilvoorde, 2013; Stokvis, 2009). School sports are organised by the school, but they are not integrated within the educational and social system of the school. The absence of an explicit link between school sports and the school community in the Netherlands might explain the absence of an association between school sport participation and student identity in this study. In addition, the fact that the coaches of the teams were not from the school itself, but youngsters from the same neighbourhood as the participants, might have contributed to the absence of a clear link between the school and the competition.

As indicated before, the student identity and sport identity of some respondents attenuated slightly during the school year. The decrease in sport identity for girls and the student identity for all students might have been caused by the phase of life in which these students were during the study. Considerable identity restructuring takes place during early adolescence (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Brettschneider, 1997; Erikson, 1968; Simmons & Blyth, 1987) in which some identities are more robust than others (Wright & Laverty, 2010). As identity has a major influence on behaviour, leisure activities are likely to change during such a life-stage transition as well (Birchwood, et al., 2008; Humbert, et al., 2008). Further research should investigate whether a similar school sport competition for younger or older students is indeed differently related to the student identity and sport identity.

The longitudinal design of the present study provided more indications of possible cause and effect relationships between school sport participation and identity formation, which allows for stronger conclusions than most other studies on school sports (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). In addition, the focus on sport identity and student identity formation offers a promising tool for comparing the potential outcomes of different school sport interventions. However, the choice for focussing on the mediating outcomes of sport identity and student identity can be considered a limitation with regard to the conclusions about the claimed effects of school sport participation on different social, psychological, educational and health outcomes. Although studies indicated a mediating effect of identity formation between school sport participation and these outcomes (e.g., Brewer, et al., 1993; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003), it cannot be ruled out that other mechanisms can explain the relationship between school sport participation and the beneficial outcomes. This means that the conclusions of this study should be limited to identity formation. In future studies, the relationship between identity formation and these beneficial outcomes should be investigated as well. In addition, a larger group of respondents would allow for more detailed analyses and a higher reliability. Furthermore, qualitative research should be done to investigate the possible role of school sports in (sport) socialisation in more detail (Green, 2012).

Conclusion

The present study indicated that the relationship between sport identity, student identity and school sport participation does not reflect a socialisation effect and may be explained by a selection effect, although further research is necessary to test that latter hypothesis. Therefore, these results question the potential impact

of school sports participation on the development of children, which is in clear contrast to commonplace assumptions. Furthermore, these results endorse the recommendations for more longitudinal studies on the effects of school sports (e.g., Bailey, 2006; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003), because with longitudinal study designs the often assumed socialisation effects of (school) sports can be evidence based or questioned, as has been done in this study.

Chapter 9

Socialisation into organised sports

Based on:

Pot, N., Verbeek, J., Zwan, J. van der, & Hilvoorde, I. van (in revision). Socialisation into organised sports of young adolescents with a lower socio-economic status. *Sport, Education and Society*.

Introduction

Increasing sport participation is a policy goal in many countries, because sport is regarded an important vehicle for generating all kinds of social, psychological, health and academic effects (e.g., European Commission, 2011). In order to promote sport participation, it is necessary to get a deeper understanding of why children participate in sports (Devís-Devís, et al., 2013; Light, et al., 2013; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012).

A consistent finding across studies investigating determinants of sport participation is that sport socialisation at an early age appears to be an important determinant for sport participation throughout the life course (e.g., Birchwood, et al., 2008; Kraaykamp, et al., 2013; Scheerder et al., 2006; Telama et al., 2005). This means that the socio-cultural and economic context of the family, or network of families, is often seen as a major socialising context with regard to sport participation and other leisure activities (Bourdieu, 1984; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Duncan, Al-Nakeeb, Nevill, & Jones, 2004; Kraaykamp et al., 2013; Macdonald et al., 2004; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; Wheeler, 2012). However, there are also studies focussing more on the complex interplay of different social contexts influencing sport participation, such as the family, school or peers (e.g., Devís-Devís et al., 2013; Wright, et al., 2003). The relative influence of these socialising contexts and other determinants of sport and physical activity participation appears to be related to social class differences (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Humbert et al., 2006; Stuij, 2013).

Policy-makers and scholars are especially interested in ways to increase the sport participation rates of children from families with a lower socio-economic status (SES), since they are in general less inclined to participate in sports (e.g., Bourdieu, 1978; Hartmann-Tews, 2006; Nielsen, et al., 2012; Scheerder, Vanreusel, Taks, & Renson, 2002; Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010). Many studies focussed on barriers for youngsters from lower SES families to participate in sport, such as financial means, safety and availability of sport facilities (e.g., Dagkas & Quarmby, 2012; Devís-Devís et al., 2013; Kraaykamp et al., 2013; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012). These are all relevant aspects of sport socialisation. However, to get a deeper insight in sport socialisation of youngsters from lower SES families, it is crucial to understand why some children from lower SES families *do* participate in sports, notwithstanding these presumed barriers to participate. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the socialisation into organised sports of youngsters from lower SES families.

Theoretical background

Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1978, 1984), (sport) behaviour can be seen as a manifestation of the individual habitus. Habitus is a system of dispositions that (unconsciously) influences thoughts, values, behaviour and interpretations (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006). The habitus is acquired through life-long internalisation of social conditions, constraints and opportunities of the environment people are exposed to, with a special emphasis on early childhood (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006). The habitus that people acquire depends at least in part on the specific forms and amount of capital (cultural, economic, social and symbolic) people possess. For the acquisition of a sports habitus, it can be suggested that one needs a specific type of cultural capital, namely 'sporting capital' (Coalter, 2007a; Nielsen et al., 2012; Stuij, 2013; Wilson, 2002). The foundation of the sports habitus, and therefore long-term sport participation, is sporting capital which encompasses technical aspects (e.g., sport skills, knowledge about rules and tactics), but also socio-cultural aspects (e.g., a network of 'sporty' people, knowing the socio-cultural context of sporting clubs, etc.) (Green, et al., 2013; Jakobsson, et al., 2012; Light et al., 2013; Nielsen et al., 2012; Stuij, 2013).

Bourdieu (1984) indicated that most capital is acquired through heritage (intergenerational transmission), which largely depends on family upbringing (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012). This is in line with the studies mentioned before, that indicate field of the family as a primary context for sport socialisation (e.g., Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; Wheeler, 2012). However, a major critique to Bourdieu's work is that he did not explain the acquisition of a habitus in detail at the micro level (Bernstein, 1990, pp. 161-162; Noble & Watkins, 2003). Bernstein (1990) argued that theories like Bourdieu's "cannot generate the principles of description of the agencies" (p. 163), because Bourdieu's main focus was on the social (power) relations between people and not so much on the description of individuals and their motives (Bernstein, 1990; Harker & May, 1993). Therefore, based on the work of Halliday (1969), Bernstein distinguished the instructional, regulative, imaginative and interpersonal contexts in which socialisation takes place (Bernstein, 1974, p. 198). In the *regulative context* social interaction and (moral) knowledge about relationships can be learned. In the *instructional context*, children learn the necessary (technical) skills. In the *imaginative context* is room for experimenting with what is learned. In the *interpersonal context*, children learn about values and emotions. Furthermore, Bernstein argued that the basic agencies of socialisation are the family, school and peers (Bernstein, 1974, p. 174). He indicated that within these contexts socialisation takes place by developing a cultural identity and

the response to that identity (Bernstein, 1974, p. 174). This extensive view on socialisation forced him to limit his discussion to the “linguistic performances within the family critical to the process of socialization” (Bernstein, 1974, p. 175). As sport can also be regarded a cultural behaviour that requires socialisation (Bourdieu, 1984; Tamboer, 1992), Bernstein’s theoretical framework can be useful for explaining the interaction between the macro and micro level in the formation of the (sports) habitus (Bernstein, 1990; Bourdieu, 1984; Harker & May, 1993; cf. Stuij, 2013). It can be suggested that the technical aspects of sporting capital can be acquired in the instructional contexts, whereas the socio-cultural aspects of sporting capital can be acquired in the regulative and interpersonal contexts. The theoretical framework of Bernstein is useful to understand sport socialisation.

Stuij (2013) investigated the formation process of the sport habitus of elementary school children based on the four contexts described by Bernstein (1974, 1990). Because of the vast differences in sport participation rates between children of lower and higher social classes, she analysed differences in the habitus formation between these groups. The findings of Stuij (2013) indicated that most children from both higher and lower SES families encounter an instructional context where the technical aspects of sporting capital (sport skills, rules and tactics) were learned, although children from higher SES families are typically more endowed with these technical aspects of sporting capital. Therefore, the possession of the technical or tactical capacities of a sport does not seem to be sufficient to explain differences in sport participation levels between high and low SES groups. However, according to Stuij (2013), within the regulative and interpersonal context, differences existed between children from higher and lower SES backgrounds. For children from higher SES families, these regulative and interpersonal contexts were mainly provided by the family. Children in the lower SES group were more engaged in unorganised sports and were influenced by three regulative and interpersonal contexts: the (extended) family, the PE teacher and peers. Although Stuij (2013) indicated that children from lower SES families had more social and physical space to experiment with their sport and exercise skills (imaginative context), this was mostly done during outdoor play and thus outside of the organised sport club setting. Therefore, the imaginative context was not investigated in the present study.

It is the question whether the findings of Stuij (2013) are related to the age of her participants. When children enter puberty or transfer from elementary to secondary education, the relative influence on sport participation between

socialising agents tends to change (Allender, et al., 2006; Bourdieu, 1984; Devís-Devís et al., 2013; Haycock & Smith, 2011) from parents to the extended family, peers and new social networks (Allender et al., 2006; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Zeijl, Poel, Bois-Reymond, Ravesloot, & Meulman, 2000). Therefore, it can be questioned whether the socialising agents are similar or different for first year high school students (12-13 yrs) compared to elementary school children (e.g., Stuij, 2013; Wheeler, 2012) or older adolescents (Devís-Devís et al., 2013; Humbert et al., 2006) that were investigated in previous studies. As sport participation of children from middle- to lower social classes is lower in general (e.g., Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010) and sport participation rates tend to drop during the transition from elementary school to high school (Tiessen-Raaphorst, et al., 2010), it is important to get more insight in the complex interplay of socialising agents of youngsters from lower SES families during early adolescence. In the present case study, we drew upon Bernstein's (1974, 1990) conceptual framework and Stuij's (2013) research in the analysis of the contexts in which socialisation takes place. Given this frame of reference, the present study focussed on the socialising contexts of the family, school and peers as regulative and interpersonal contexts for sport socialisation for first year high school students with a lower SES background.

Methods

Participants

Twenty-five first year students from a secondary school located in Emmen (The Netherlands) were interviewed for this study. Emmen is a middle sized city (around 57,000 inhabitants) in the east of the Netherlands, surrounded by rural communities. Statistics show that Emmen has a high percentage of school drop-outs, lower educated inhabitants and inhabitants that are unfit for work, compared to the Dutch average (Dijk, 2006). This results in a relatively low socio-economic position of the city. The school at which this study was conducted offers all levels of secondary education and is considered a modern, well performing school with around 2000 students.

The participants were selected for the interviews by their PE teacher, who received selection criteria based on the sport participation level and socio-economic status of the students. The selection criterion for sport participation level was based on the Dutch research guidelines for the definition of sport participation (participate in sport at least 40 weeks per year) (Tiessen-Raaphorst et al., 2010). Parental occupation and education were used to classify the SES of the students, based on the Dutch occupation standards (CBS, 2010) and the UK

National Statistics socioeconomic classification system (ONS, 2010). As the present study was performed to get insight in the sport socialisation of students from lower SES families, only students with a middle to low SES score (4 to 8) were included.

Table 9.1: Participant characteristics: participant number, sex, age, current education level, current sport participation, age at the moment of first introduction to organised sports, current or past sport participation of parents.

nr	Sex	Age	Edu. level*	Sport	Age sport	Sport parents
1	M	12	vmbo	Football	8	Swimming, Football
2	F	13	vmbo	Horse riding	6	Dancing
3	M	12	vmbo	Football	4	Squash, Football
4	F	12	vmbo	Football	unknown	Diving, Dancing, Boxing, Football
5	M	12	vmbo	Football	7	Running
6	F	13	vmbo	Horse riding	6	Mountain biking, Horse riding
7	M	14	vmbo	Football	unknown	Cricket
8	F	13	vmbo	Field hockey	10	Speed skating, Football
9	F	13	vmbo	Football	8	Football
10	F	12	vmbo	Horse riding, Street dance	8	Horse riding, Football, volleyball
11	M	13	vmbo	Football	4	Football
12	F	14	havo	Volleyball	5	Handball, Volleyball
13	F	14	havo	Horse riding	7	Running, Swimming, Horse riding
14	M	14	vmbo	Football	4	Football
15	M	15	vmbo	Swimming	9	Football
16	M	13	vmbo	Football	7	Football
17	M	14	vmbo	Football	4	Football
18	M	13	vwo	Boy scouts	unknown	Handball
19	M	14	havo	Football	6	Fitness, Football
20	F	14	havo	Volleyball	9	Handball
21	M	14	havo	None**	10	Volleyball

* Educational level: VMBO = pre vocational education, HAVO = pre professional education, VWO = pre university education

** recently quit his football participation

After rechecking the inclusion criteria after the interviews, it was found that two participants stopped participating in organised sport three years ago. These participants were excluded from the analysis. One participant recently stopped, but did meet the criterion for sport participation six months prior to the interview. Therefore, this participant was included. In addition, two participants were excluded because their socioeconomic status was too high (SES score 2 and 3). This resulted in 21 included participants (9 girls and 12 boys; $M_{\text{age}} = 13.3$ years; $SD = \pm 0.9$) (see Table 9.1). Three participants had a foreign ethnic background, although two of them were born in the Netherlands. The participant who was not born in the Netherlands was adopted by Dutch parents.

Procedure

First, the study was approved by the ethics committee of the VU University Amsterdam. Before recruiting the participants, the school management was informed about the objective and nature of the study. Subsequently, the PE teacher informed the potential participants about the study. After their agreement to participate but before the interviews took place, an informed consent was obtained from the parents and participants assuring anonymity. The actual data collection by interviewing the participants was conducted in March and April 2013. The interviews were semi-structured, which enabled subsequent and specific questioning. The interviews were carried out by two researchers (second and third author) during the PE class of the participants, in a private room next to the gymnasium. Each semi-structured interview lasted between approximately 20 to 30 minutes. The time for the interviews was mainly limited by the class schedule of the participants and, but also by earlier experiences with the attention span of participants from this age group. Although the duration of the interviews was relatively short, it was possible to address all the topics of the interview guide. The interview guide was based on the three possible regulative and interpersonal contexts for sport socialisation (school, peers and family), as Bernstein (1974, p. 174) indicated this to be the main agencies for socialisation. By conducting a pilot interview with a 12-year-old boy, the interview guide was further improved. Examples of questions from the interview guide are shown in Table 2. Because the interview setting may have been experienced as intimidating, efforts were made to accommodate the participants. The teacher introduced the interviewers at the start of the class, after which the interviews commenced. At the start of each interview, the interviewers introduced themselves and the purpose of the interviews and assured anonymity again. Furthermore, the interview guide started with some easy to answer questions.

All the interviews were audio-recorded and during the interviews notes were taken by the interviewers about issues which needed to be considered during the coding.

Table 9.2: Examples of questions guiding the interviews (translated from Dutch).

<i>What are the reasons for you to participate in sport?</i>
<i>Did these reasons change over the years you have been participating in [sport]?</i>
<i>What would be a reason for you to quit participating in [sport]?</i>
<i>In what way did you learn about the social manners that are present within your sport club?</i>
<i>In which ways do your parents support your sports participation?</i>
<i>In what way does playing [sport] during PE influence your actual [sport] participation?</i>
<i>Have you ever considered asking your PE teacher for advice regarding the choice for a new sport?</i>
<i>Did you already know friends who were actively involved in [sport]?</i>

Data analysis

All the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. During the process of data analysis, two researchers read the transcripts independently to identify the three primary themes (school, family and peers). Subsequently, subcategories within these themes were formed based on relevant literature, the interview data and discussions between the researchers. The actual coding involved the following 3 steps. First, data were categorised according to the primary themes. Logically, this will filter out any irrelevant or repeating data. Second, within these themes data were coded according to the subcategories. Third, subcategories within the themes that coded for similar information were connected with each other (Denscombe, 2010). This process provided a categorical structure of the data and became the basis of the findings presented in the following section. Consultation between the researchers and re-checking of the transcribed interviews during the analysis were used to improve the reliability of the data analysis.

Findings

The data are categorised along the three primary themes (school, family and peers), in order to get insight in the regulative and interpersonal contexts for sport socialisation. Quotes were translated from Dutch by the authors (I=Interviewer, P=Participant).

Family

The introduction into sports is very important for sport socialisation, as it provides children the opportunity to get acquainted with the social context of the sporting club (Macphail, et al., 2003). Especially when children joined their parents from a young age to the parents' sporting clubs, this introduction can have a strong impact on the acquisition of the social aspects of sporting capital. At a young age, it is to be expected that the family is the most obvious way to get introduced to sports, which has been shown in previous research indicating the family as a major socialising force for sport participation (e.g., Dixon, Warner, & Bruening, 2008; Kraaykamp et al., 2013; Light et al., 2013; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010, 2012; Wheeler, 2012). Regardless of their age at the moment of introduction, most participants in the present study indicated that their parents were primarily responsible for the introduction to sports, as the following example illustrates:

I: Do you remember why you started to play football?

P 17: I guess that was my father. He played football himself.

The strong influence of parents is somewhat surprising, as it is often suggested that children from lower SES families are in general less stimulated by their families to participate in organised sports (e.g., Bourdieu, 1978; Bourdieu, 1984; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Nielsen et al., 2012; Scheerder et al., 2002). It appears that the parents of 'sporty' students with a lower SES have a similar role in the introduction to sports as the parents of students with a higher SES (Stuij, 2013; Wheeler, 2012).

The participants experienced the decisions to start participating in a sport as a free choice without explicit influence of their parents. However, it can be argued that these decisions were influenced by the habitus of the children. Habitus constrains the possibilities and allows a predetermined pattern of behaviours, it is the "unchosen principle of all choices" (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006, p. 7).

The participants mentioned some parental practices that stimulated their ongoing participation in sports, after the initial introduction. These parental practices can be categorised as the parental practices that Wheeler (2012) distinguished for children from higher SES families: support, encouragement and coaching.

The way in which the parents of the participants in the present study supported and encouraged their children was comparable to younger children (Wheeler, 2012) and adolescents (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007) from families with a higher SES. Parents supported their children with transportation to practices and matches, attendance at matches and financial support, as is illustrated by the

following excerpt from an interview:

I: Are your parents actively involved in your volleyball participation?

P 20: They are always present during my matches and they drive me to most of the away-games. But especially my mother comes to see me a lot.

This kind of support is very important for continued engagement in sports, as an absence of this kind of instrumental support might be a barrier to stay engaged in sports (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Humbert et al., 2006; Macdonald et al., 2004).

In addition, the parents encouraged their children by cheering for them at matches and giving advice about technical and tactical situations. In most cases, the encouragement was experienced as positive and stimulating, as the following quote illustrates:

I: Does your father give any advices about your sport [football]?

P 1: Yes, when I was a goalkeeper...he always helped me by standing next to the goal and he always said: "look over there, stay focused, etc."

I: Do you appreciate the help he gives you?

P 1: Yes, very much because he knows a lot about football so it really helps me.

Some of the parents acted as coaches of their children's team. Other parents talked with the participants about their sports, sharing knowledge and values about the sport. In most cases, this was knowledge about tactical and technical skills, but sometimes also about other aspects of sport participation, such as the potential health benefits and the possibilities for social interaction. This teaching and coaching function (Wheeler, 2012) was strongest when the parents (used to) play the same sport as the participants:

I: In what way do your parents support you in your sport participation? Do they attend any of your matches?

P 19: Well, for instance, my father is our head coach. So he is always present during our matches. He used to play football so he has a lot of sport specific knowledge.

I: What is the influence of your parents on your football participation?

P 14: My father is also a trainer of my brothers team. And my mother visits every match

I: Did you learn any football specific skills from your father?

P 14: Yeah, really just how to play football and that kind of things.

The involvement of parents increased the significance of sport participation in the lives of the participants. Moreover, some participants experienced sport participation as an activity of the whole family. This means that the participants in the present study experienced a stronger influence of what the family considered important values and behaviours, compared to older adolescents with a lower SES, most of whom experienced no whole family approach to physical activity (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007). Habitus formation is often a process of inheritance, which is illustrated by the fact that the parents of all participants (used to) play sports. In fact, 13 of the 21 participants played the same sports as their parents (used to) do (see Table 9.1). These shared activities might be crucial for the formation and reinforcement of the sports habitus (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Macdonald et al., 2004).

In a previous study, it has been found that for younger children of a lower SES background, the extended family, such as uncles and cousins, provided a regulative context (Stuij, 2013). In a similar fashion, younger children with a higher SES experienced an influence of networks of families (Wheeler, 2012). This means that not only the nuclear family had an influence on sport socialisation, but also the families of friends or their parent's friends. However, in the present study only four children referred to the extended family as a source of sport socialisation. A girl explained:

I: Would you have decided to participate in horse riding even if your friend would have chosen another sport?

P 2: Yes, I would have....because my cousin was already involved in horse riding. That is also how I convinced my parents that I wanted to participate in horse riding.

[...]

I: Are there any more family members involved in horse riding?

P 2: Yes there are. My other cousin, my uncle and aunt are also involved. Moreover my grandparents participated in horse riding

In conclusion, for most participants parents formed a regulative context, because they introduced their children to sport and the social context of the sporting club. In addition, some parents formed an interpersonal context, as they explicitly shared values, opinions and knowledge about sport participation with their children. The parental practices and interactions experienced in these contexts are crucial for the significance of sports in the lives of the participants. They exerted a strong influence on the acquisition of the social aspects of sporting capital: knowledge

about sport, values of the sport, familiarity with a sporting club and the support to stay engaged. Therefore, it can be concluded that the parents of the participants in the present study were important for the formation of the sports habitus. This influence is comparable to the influence of the nuclear family of younger children with a higher SES (Stuij, 2013; Wheeler, 2012) and older adolescents regardless of their SES (Humbert et al., 2006).

However, the absence of a clear influence of the extended family or networks of families is in contrast to the influence on younger children with a lower (Stuij, 2013) or higher SES (Wheeler, 2012).

School

Often, the school is regarded as a context that might contribute to sport participation (Bailey, 2006; Green, et al., 2005; Trudeau & Shephard, 2008). The expectation is that PE and school sport have an influence on sport participation during the life course. The participants in the present study regarded their PE lessons and extra-curricular school sport as enjoyable activities, in which new sports can be introduced:

I: What kind of sports do you play during PE?

P 5: Most of the time we play team sports, but sometimes more track and field kinds of activities.

I: Are there any sports which you have kind of 'discovered' during your PE lessons?

P 5: Hmmm....maybe for instance volleyball...

I: How come?

P 5: I never enjoyed watching it...however by just doing it with your classmates helped to really see it more as a fun sport in which you can win in the end. And I really like winning so...

This is in line with the findings of Stuij (2013) who regarded the school as an important instructive context in which the technical and tactical aspects of sports can be learned. However, the participants in the present study did not regard PE or school sports as a regulative context, as none of the participants referred to knowledge about the social aspects of sport participation when discussing the school context. In addition, the participants indicated that they did not try sports outside of the school context that were introduced during PE. Therefore, the activities offered during PE and extra-curricular school sports were not regarded as relevant to their 'out of school' club sport participation. A boy explained this as follows:

I: Did you participate in any of the school sports?

P 15: Yes I have. I joined the school football team last year. However, it did not went very well, but I liked it though.

I: So would you consider participating in football more?

P 15: No not really. I just enjoy it doing during lunch-breaks here at school. But I would never consider actually joining a football club

Interestingly, the participants indicated that they did not like playing their 'own' sport during PE, because either the level was too low or classmates did not put enough effort in trying. Furthermore, sometimes the participants felt they were forced to participate in dull or boring sports, as the following excerpts exemplify:

I: Do you play a lot of football during the PE lessons?

P 9: No not really unfortunately...

I: So what do you think about the other sports you play during the PE lessons?

P 9: I don't really enjoy them as much as I would enjoy playing football, but...yeah....you just have to participate.

I: What do you think about the PE lessons? Did you develop another view on the sports you played during those lessons?

P 17: Not quite, because in PE you play those sports for a prolonged period of time. This makes it very dull in the end.

In these instances, the interpersonal context within the school did not further stimulate the formation of a sports habitus. Moreover, experiencing some sports as dull may even stimulate negative feelings towards a sport.

Although the participants regarded the relationship with their PE teacher as pleasant, they did not talk about sport participation with their teacher. For example, some participants indicated that their teacher had no idea about what type of sport they performed outside of school. In addition, they would not turn to their PE teacher if they had questions about sport participation or when they would be searching for a new sport:

I: Does your PE teacher know you participate in horse riding?

P 6: Well....I guess he knows...

I: So do you talk about horse riding with him?

P 6: No never actually. But I don't really care

[...]

I: If you were looking for a new sport, would you turn to him for any advice?

P 6: No, not at all.

From these findings, it can be concluded that for these participants PE and school sports provided no regulative context in which the social aspects of sporting capital can be learned. This is in line with the conclusions of previous studies, stating that in the school context "nobody received information about environmental, cultural or psychosocial issues linked to physical activity and sport participation" (Devís-Devís et al., 2013, p. 12), that children do not learn about the social connotations of being a member of a sports club (Stuij, 2013) and that the PE teacher did not provide encouragement for participating in physical activities or school sport (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007). Therefore, the school context did not influence the formation or reinforcement of a sports habitus for these participants.

Peers

Most interviewees indicated that peers or friends played a role in their sport socialisation, which is in line with other studies indicating that peers were important for the motivation to play sports for youngsters from lower SES families (Allender et al., 2006; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007). For most of the participants in the present study, peers lowered the threshold for sport participation. Although friends were not considered overly important for the idea that sport should be a part of their life (sports habitus), some interviewees indicated that the actual step to sport participation was influenced by friends. A girl explained how her friend introduced her to field hockey:

I: In what way did you come in contact with field hockey?

P 8: It was just after my injury...which made me quit gymnastics. I wanted to stay actively involved in sports and was looking for an alternative. This friend of mine played field hockey and told me a lot of things. So she kind of introduced me to field hockey

The persuasion of friends to actually start participating in sport was also related to the choice for a particular type of sport. For instance, for some participants friends were considered an important information source when they could not decide which sport to choose. Most often, they joined friends to a practice to try a new sport, as is illustrated by this quote:

I: Can you describe the first moments in which you came in contact with football?

P 21: Yes it was because of my friends that I first heard about football. They were already actively involved and because I did not participate in any sports at that time....They told me football was a very cool sport. Therefore I decided to visit a training and from there on I wanted to play football.

For these participants, peers were important for club sport participation, which is comparable to the role peers have for younger children of higher SES families (Stuij, 2013). However, younger children of lower SES families considered their peers to be mainly important for participation in *unorganised* sports, such as playing outdoors (Stuij, 2013).

The influence of friends on the type of sport was further emphasised by answers to the question what the participant would do if his/her friends would join another sport. Some of them indicated that they would follow their friends to another sport:

I: You already told us your friends were of great influence on your participation in football. But let's say if your friends had been involved in for instance volleyball. Would you have considered this as a possible sport?

P 5: Hmmm....I don't know really...I would have to think about it a lot and it could well be that I would have participated in volleyball if it was the case

The social interaction with friends is considered an important motivation to play sport, which is in line with previous studies (Humbert et al., 2006). The interviewees thought it was important to have fun with teammates and that an absence of that fun-factor might be a reason to quit:

I: What could be a possible reasons for you to quit sports?

P 4: Probably a team which is not that fun anymore. If you can't give 100% for each other I would lose the fun [.....] I have experienced this once and it made me really doubt if I should continue sports

In summary, peers were experienced by the participants to be mainly important for the introduction to a particular sport. In that sense, peers formed a regulative context. Moreover, peers formed an interpersonal context because the social contact and interpersonal relations between the participants and their friends were considered an important motivation and an important part of their sport experience. Although peers were not regarded as important for the initial habit of

playing sport, they can be considered an important context for the acquisition of sporting capital.

Furthermore, the participants indicated that sport participation acted as a way to relate to peers. From notes taken during the interviews, it can be concluded that participants were very happy and proud to talk about their sport experiences. In that sense, being sporty served as (symbolic) capital (Bourdieu, 1986), which might be converted into other forms of (economic, cultural and social) capital (Driscoll & Wood, 1999; Stempel, 2006).

Discussion and Conclusion

Many studies investigating social class differences in sport participation focussed on reasons why people with a lower SES background are less inclined to participate in sports (e.g., Dagkas & Quarmby, 2012; Devís-Devís et al., 2013). However, in order to get a complete grasp on the sport socialisation of youngsters with a lower SES background, it is also important to understand how (some) persons with a lower SES nevertheless develop a sports habitus. Therefore, the present study focussed on the influence of family, school and peers on the formation of the sports habitus of young adolescents with a lower SES background.

The data showed that the parents are extremely important for the predisposition to play sports and for transferring the socio-cultural aspects of sporting capital. Parents introduced children to the social context of the sporting club, but also guided the formation of sports related values and behaviour. Therefore, the parents formed a regulative and interpersonal context (Bernstein, 1974). This finding seems to be in line with the theoretical framework of Bourdieu (1984), in which socialisation in the early years is considered very important. For participants in the present study, the extended family played a marginal role in sport socialisation. It might be that for these participants the extended family is not proximate enough during the early adolescent years in order to have an influence on the sport socialisation of the present sample.

The school context of the participants did not seem able to form a regulative or interpersonal context in which they learned about the social aspects relevant to organised sport participation or the values and feelings belonging to sport. Furthermore, PE-teachers were not considered significant agents for sport socialisation. The absence of an influence of the school context on the formation of sporting capital is in line with Bourdieu (1984), who indicated that the apparent acquisition of capital within the educational system is often a conversion of

inherited capital (p.73). Moreover, if anything, PE lessons sometimes had a negative influence on the image of some sport, as they were regarded as boring by some.

The results of this study show that peers (friends) play an important role in the choice for certain sports or the introduction to new sports. Through peers, some participants got acquainted with new social contexts which might reshape their (sports) habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006). Although the predisposition to play sports might be transmitted primarily by the parents, peers have an influence on the interpretation that these young adolescents give to their sports habitus.

In summary, it can be concluded that the sports habitus of the young adolescents with a lower SES background in the present study is mainly *formed* by the parents, who provide a regulative and interpersonal context in which the social aspects of sporting capital can be transmitted. The peers formed a regulative and interpersonal context that *restructured* and often *reinforced* the sports habitus. It should be noted that the results found in the present study may be explained by the specific social and demographic context of the participants studied.

Similarities between youngsters with a higher and lower SES background

Interestingly, the socialisation into sports of these young adolescents with a lower SES background shows strong similarities with the sport socialisation of youngsters with a higher SES background (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Stuij, 2013; Wheeler, 2012). For instance, in line with previous studies indicating the importance of parents in sport socialisation (e.g., Birchwood et al., 2008; Bourdieu, 1984; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; Wheeler, 2012), the participants in the present sample considered the role of their parents in a similar way as younger children with a higher SES (Stuij, 2013; Wheeler, 2012).

For the participants in the present study, the regulative and interpersonal context within the school was absent. This finding is consistent with earlier studies indicating an absence of an influence of PE or school sports on sport participation, regardless of SES (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Devís-Devís et al., 2013; Evans & Davies, 2010; Green, 2012).

Peers played an important role in restructuring the sports habitus for the young adolescents in the present sample by influencing the type of sports which they participated in. This is similar to the role of peers of children from higher SES, who were involved in joining a sports club (Stuij, 2013).

Although sporting club membership is more common in higher SES groups (e.g., Bourdieu, 1978; Kraaykamp et al., 2013; Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010), the present study indicates that *if* youngsters with a lower SES participate in organised sports,

the socialisation process is similar to that of youngsters with a higher SES. This would support the claim that socialisations into sports is relatively independent of SES (cf. Birchwood et al., 2008, p. 291). The present study indicates that parents are the key to sport participation: If they are able to provide a context in which sporting capital can be transmitted, chances are higher that children will (continue to) participate in sports, irrelevant of the SES of the parents. Nevertheless, socio-economic context differences are very relevant when studying differences in participation rates between youngsters from lower and higher SES families.

Differences between younger and older children with a lower SES

Another aim of this study was to give some insight in possible differences between the interplay of socialising agents for young adolescents compared to younger children. A difference between the younger children in the study of Stuij (2013) and the adolescents in the present study was the role of the extended family or network of families which played an important role in the formation of the sports habitus for the younger children (Stuij, 2013).

The school context played a similar role for younger children (Stuij, 2013) and young adolescents from lower SES families by providing an instructional context for some young adolescents but not a regulative or interpersonal context.

The role of peers is different compared to younger children with a lower SES background, because at a younger age peers were mainly involved in unorganised sports and play outside. Peers did not play a major role in organised sport participation for children with a lower SES (Stuij, 2013).

It may be that in the earlier years the parents are very dominant in socialisation (Bourdieu, 1984), which leaves no room for other socialising agents to restructure the habitus. Based on a comparison between the study of Stuij (Stuij, 2013) and the present findings, it may be suggested that when children enter adolescence, other agents gain influence on the sports habitus. Although this influence might be beneficial, it may also be that influences other than the parents' can lead to drop-out from sports (e.g., Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2008). It has to be noted though that in the study of Stuij (2013) the younger children with a lower SES were primarily involved in unorganised sport and physical activities, whereas in the present study sport club members were included. The hypothesis that the interplay between socialising agents changes when children enter adolescence should be investigated in a longitudinal study in which the interplay between socialising agents is followed from an early age into adulthood in different SES contexts.

Both Bourdieu (1984) and Bernstein (1974, 1990) indicated that interpretation and meaning is context dependent. This means that the findings of the present study must be understood in the light of the structure of the interviews and the socio-economic context of the participants. For instance, it may be that the sport clubs in which these participants were involved can be considered lower class sport clubs, as most participants were involved in football (Bourdieu, 1984). This would be an indication that social class does play a role in the way sport socialisation works.

Although Bernstein (1974), Bourdieu (1984) and Stuij (2013) indicated the family, school and peers to be primary socialising contexts (fields), it may be that other fields, such as religion, (social) media, elite athletes and government campaigns, influence the sport socialisation of young adolescents as well. Therefore, the focus of the interviews on the family, school and peers may have influenced the findings. It may be that youngsters from lower SES families differ in the influence of those other socialising factors from youngsters from higher SES families. Furthermore, the limited length of the interviews may have prevented an in-depth analysis of all the topics.

Nevertheless, based on the findings of this study it can be hypothesised that the way in which sport socialisation works is relatively independent of SES and that the interplay between fields and socialising agents is different for young adolescents compared to younger children. Although these hypotheses have to be investigated in future studies, this study contributes to the understanding of how social class and sport socialisation processes may be related.

Part III

Chapter 10

Discussion and conclusion

Sport socialisation

Many sport and health policies are aimed at increasing sport participation rates (e.g., European Commission, 2011; Ministry of OCW, 2012). In order to understand the processes leading to sport participation, there is a need for more research focused on sport socialisation (Devís-Devís, et al., 2013). As it is often conceived that school sport and PE can play a role in sport socialisation, more insight in the role of the school context in sport socialisation is necessary. Therefore, this thesis aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of sport socialisation, the possible relationship of sport participation and beneficial effects and the potential role of the school context in this.

Drawing on the theoretical work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1986), it was argued that sport related behaviour is influenced by the possession of a (sporting) habitus. Habitus can be defined as a set of dispositions that (unconsciously) guide actions, thoughts and judgements (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006). The development of a sports habitus is dependent on the possession of what could be termed sporting capital (Coalter, 2007a; Nielsen, et al., 2012; Stuij, 2013; Wilson, 2002). Both technical aspects of sporting capital (e.g., sport skills, knowledge about rules and tactics) and socio-cultural aspects of sporting capital (e.g., a network of sports-minded people, knowing the social and cultural rules of engagement at sporting clubs, etc.) appear to be necessary for the development of the sports habitus and consequently for long-term sport participation (Green, et al., 2013; Light, et al., 2013; Nielsen, et al., 2012).

Bourdieu argued that the acquisition of capital was largely determined by intergenerational inheritance. This means that the family is the most important source of sporting capital. Although many studies confirmed the importance of the family in sport socialisation (e.g., Birchwood, et al., 2008; Dagkas & Quarmby, 2012; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; Wheeler, 2012), sport participation levels appear to be more susceptible to change than suggested by Bourdieu (e.g., Klostermann & Nagel, 2012; Ohl, 2000). In addition, the concepts of habitus and capital are rather hard to operationalise in empirical studies. Therefore, *sport identity* was used in this thesis as an indication of the role that sport plays in somebody's self-concept and to refer to the possession of all relevant aspects of sporting capital.

The social context of sport participation

As mentioned in chapter 1, it is assumed in policy that sport participation has beneficial (health) effects and that sport participation can be stimulated by

increasing the *fundamental movement skills* or the *physical literacy* of children (e.g., DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002; Ministry of VWS, 2011b; NOC*NSF, 2012b; Office of Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, 2008; WHO, 2010). Two points have to be made with regard to these assumptions.

First, sport and physical activity should not be regarded as concepts that can be used interchangeably. In chapter 2 and 3, it has been argued that sport is a social phenomenon, in which certain activities are being done within a sports context (Bourdieu, 1984; Tamboer, 1992). Although it is generally assumed that physical activity is healthy (e.g., Bauman, 2004; Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010; Peng, et al., 2011), it is often not explained for what type of physical activity and in which contexts these findings are valid. Therefore, it cannot be assumed without further elaboration that sport participation and PE will lead to health effects. Nevertheless, sport is often being put forward as a context in which children can meet the physical activity guidelines, as sport is the most obvious context for children to be physically active.

Second, sport participation is often considered behaviour that can be taught and shaped (e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010; European Commission, 2011; WHO, 2012). This means that projects and curricula aimed at increasing movement skills and knowledge about rules and tactics of sport are being endorsed with the aim of increasing sport participation levels. The concepts of *fundamental movement skills* and *physical literacy* are increasingly being put forward to substantiate this assumption (e.g., Barnett, et al., 2009; DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002; NOC*NSF, 2012b; Stodden, et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2010). However, in chapter 2 and 3 of this thesis, it was argued that sport socialisation incorporates more than increasing movement skills (technical aspects of sporting capital). Although the possession of certain movement skills may be related to sport participation (e.g., Barnett, Cliff, Morgan, & Beurden, 2013), the social and cultural environment determines the possession of the social aspects of sporting capital, such as a 'sporty' social network and knowledge about the social rules of a sport and sporting club. Therefore, the social and cultural environment enables or constrains sport participation, as they afford the development and use of movement skills in a sports context. It was argued that neither fundamental movement skills or physical literacy, nor the socio-cultural context can explain sport socialisation on its own. Therefore, it was suggested to use the concept of *sport identity*, as an indication of the tendency to participate in sport (see chapter 2). Teaching sport skills in a relevant and realistic sport context might contribute to the development of a sport identity.

Based on studies from the United States of America (USA), it is expected in policy that extra-curricular sport initiatives in the Netherlands contribute to the development of long-term sport participation (Ministry of OCW, 2012; Ministry of VWS, 2008a, 2011a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008). In chapter 6, it was argued that the expectations of school sport in the Netherlands should not be based on studies about school sport in the USA, because of the differences in the cultural contexts of school sport in both countries. This study illustrates that policy endeavours should always be substantiated with research that is done in a context that is related to the context at which the policy is aiming. As this might not always be possible in practice, it is important that at least the context in which the research was conducted is kept in mind when using research results in policy development.

School sport participation and sport identity

In the Netherlands, no previous research existed about the effects of extra-curricular school sports. Therefore, two collaborations between school and sport in the Netherlands were investigated in chapter 7 and 8. Both studies showed a positive relationship between participation and sport identity. There are indications that this relationship can be described in terms of a selection effect (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Brettschneider, 1997). The study described in chapter 7 showed a positive correlation between sport participation and sport identity, although no differences existed in the sport identity of students participating in a sporting club at the school campus compared to students playing at a sporting club at another location. The study described in chapter 8 indicated that participants in the school sport competition had a higher sport identity prior to the competition, although this effect was not significant. Furthermore, the results in chapter 9 showed that the inclination to play sports was already formed in earlier years under influence of the family. This selection mechanism was also demonstrated in a large representative survey about school and sport in the Netherlands (Stuij, et al., 2011). That study showed that 77% of the participants in school sports were also a member of a regular (out of school) sporting club. In the study presented in chapter 8, 63% of the participants in the school sport competition were already a member of a sporting club at the start of the competition. These participants already had a strong sport identity, which influenced their decision to become a member of a sporting club and participate in school sport.

In a similar vein, research showed that projects in the Netherlands aimed at increasing sport participation have only limited effect, as most participants already play sports or have a 'healthy' exercise behaviour (Ooms & Veenhof, 2013). This could be explained by the same selection effect as described for the school sport studies.

The studies in this thesis did not provide evidence for a socialisation effect, in which school sports participation has an influence on the sport identity. The study described in chapter 8 showed that the sport identity of participants in a school sport competition did not change during the competition. In a similar fashion, it was found in chapter 9 that PE and school sport did not have an influence on the formation of the sport identity.

Both the indications of a selection effect and the absence of evidence for a socialisation effect (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Brettschneider, 1997) can be explained by the dominant role of the family in sport socialisation, that was found in chapter 9 and in earlier studies (e.g., Birchwood, et al., 2008; Dagkas & Quarmby, 2012; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; Wheeler, 2012). Predispositions acquired early in life appear to be dominant in determining sport behaviour (e.g., Perkins, Jacobs, Barber, & Eccles, 2004; Scheerder, et al., 2006). However, as identity changes are in general time-consuming processes (Burke & Stets, 2009), it may be these relatively new school sport initiatives in the Netherlands require more time before they can have an influence on the sport identity of participants. A longitudinal study lasting multiple years would be required to gain a better insight in these processes.

The school context might appear to be a promising context for sport socialisation if that does not happen in the context of the family. However, it is the question whether the socialisation of the school can indeed complement the socialisation of the family, as Bourdieu argued that the choice for a school is influenced by the parent's habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006). Therefore, parents high in sporting capital will choose a school attended by children from a similar background who are likely to have a similar endowment in sporting capital. Even if children with different amounts of sporting capital are at the same school, children will seek friends who have similar dispositions (also in terms of sport participation). Therefore, sporting capital can be regarded as a self-enhancing, reproducing form of capital (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984). This may explain why the school context and peers have not been found to have an influence on the formation of the sport identity, although peers may enhance or amplify already existing predispositions. For instance, in chapter 9, it was shown that peers have an influence on the

introduction to new sporting contexts and the choice for a specific sport.

Based on the studies in chapter 7, 8 and 9, it can be concluded that school sport initiatives in the Netherlands have no influence on the formation of a sport identity. It appears that the tendency to participate in sport, the acquisition of sporting capital and the development of a sport identity precede the actual participation in (school) sports, implying a selection effect (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Brettschneider, 1997). This predisposition to participate in sports is likely to be transmitted through the family. These findings indicate that it is not likely that participating in these school sport initiatives will have a profound effect on sport participation levels, even for those who had no previous experience with organised sports. Birchwood et al. (2008) described this as follows:

“Our [...] evidence suggests that the crucial dispositions are transmitted through families via something akin to what Bourdieu (1984) calls ‘habitus’, which lays down a mini.–max. range within which policy interventions (via school programmes or providing facilities, for example) can be effective.” (p.284)

This is in contrast to policy expectations, suggesting a socialisation effect of school sports. The absence of an influence of school sport participation on the development of a sport identity is in line with earlier studies that indicated an absence of an effect of PE on sport participation (Evans & Davies, 2010; Green, 2012).

Sport socialisation and socio-economic status

Many studies showed that sport participation in general is socially stratified. Youngsters with a higher socio-economic status (SES) have higher participation rates than youngsters with a lower SES (e.g., Bourdieu, 1978, 1984; Hartmann-Tews, 2006; Nielsen, et al., 2012; Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010). It has been suggested that SES can explain why some youngsters are more inclined to participate in sport, as people with a lower SES possess less economic, cultural and sporting capital compared with people from higher SES families (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984).

Although youngsters with a lower SES participate in sport less often, the study described in chapter 9 shows that children with a lower SES that *do* participate in organised sports experience a similar socialisation as their peers with a higher SES background. Participants in that study showed a strong role of the parents in

the introduction and initial socialisation into sports. Furthermore, they indicated their friends to be important for the choice of a specific sport. This pattern of sport socialisation was similar for youngsters with a higher SES background (e.g., Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Devís-Devís, et al., 2013; Stuij, 2013; Wheeler, 2012). What can be concluded from these findings is that a lower SES does not necessarily lead to a lower sport identity. Instead of a causal factor, SES might therefore be a confounding factor that is related to the endowment in time and money necessary for sport. Although this may explain the lower level of sport participation among persons with a lower SES found in large scale studies (e.g., Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010), it does not mean that persons with a lower SES cannot possess sporting capital (the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in sport). In chapter 9, it became clear that persons with a lower SES might have a similar sport identity and a similar socialisation into sports as persons with a higher SES. In a similar vein, it can be hypothesised that there are persons with a higher SES that have no sport identity. It seems short sighted to regard SES as an explanatory factor for sport participation. Although large scale studies do show differences in participation rates, individual cases show that stratification along SES lines is not absolute. This finding is in line with Birchwood et al. (2008), who suggested that the propensity to play sport is relatively independent of SES (p.291). This would mean that the fields of sport and family are less interrelated by SES than assumed by Bourdieu (1978, 1984).

In conclusion, school sport does not affect the sport identity of children who already have a strong sport identity. In a similar vein, no indications were found that school sport participation might stimulate the formation of the sport identity for children with a lower sport identity. Parents seem to be dominant in developing a sport identity for children with a lower as well as a higher SES. As sport identity can be regarded as a strong predictor of sport participation (e.g., Brewer, et al., 1993; Curry & Weiss, 1989; Lau, et al., 2006; see also chapter 2 of this thesis), the studies in this thesis suggest that participation in school sports, at least the initiatives studied in this thesis, will not lead to changes in sport participation rates on the long term. The strong correlation found between sport identity and sport participation suggests that the inclination to participate in (school) sports can better be explained by the possession of a *sport identity* instead of the socio-economic status of youngsters.

This means that policy endeavours aimed at increasing sport participation levels of youngsters with a lower SES background might not be effective, as SES is not a decisive factor in sport socialisation. Interventions might be more successful when they focus on the development of a sport identity, by means of a realistic introduction into the socio-cultural aspects of sport participation. Future studies should investigate whether interventions aimed at developing a sport identity are indeed more effective, as is hypothesised in this thesis.

School bonding

In policy, sports that are organised in cooperation with schools are often suggested to have effects that are related to school achievements or academic aspirations (European Commission, 2011; Ministry of VWS, 2008a, 2011a; Ministry of VWS & Ministry of OCW, 2008). Studies from Anglo-Saxon countries indeed indicated relationships between school sport participation, school grades, academic aspirations and reductions in school drop-out (e.g., Bailey, et al., 2009; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; Melnick, et al., 1992). In chapter 6, it was suggested that this relationship can be explained by the effect that school sport participation in the USA has on school bonding (e.g., Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; Stokvis, 2009; Sturm, et al., 2011). However, given the different cultural context of school sports, it is the question whether this relationship also exists in the Netherlands (see chapter 6). Therefore, a second research question of this thesis was whether school sport participation in the Netherlands is related to school bonding.

In chapter 6, school sports in the Netherlands were found to differ markedly from school sports in the USA in the competitiveness, intensity, prestige, the status that student-athletes can derive from school sports and the use of eligibility criteria. Because of these differences, it was hypothesised that school sports in the Netherlands was not related to school bonding.

The study described in chapter 7 showed that neither participating in a sporting club at the campus, nor participating in a sporting club located elsewhere was related to school bonding. These findings were confirmed in the study described in chapter 8, in which no relationship was found between participation in a school sport competition and school bonding. Although participants enjoyed participating in the school sports, they did not appear to associate this enjoyment with the relationship they have with their school. It may be that if the competitiveness, intensity and prestige that can be gained from participating in school sports would be more similar to the USA, a school bonding effect might be

found. However, the specific organisation of youth sports in independent clubs in the Netherlands (see chapter 5 and 6) does not leave much room for school sports to develop in a way that a more explicit and intense relationship with the school is possible.

Based on the findings in chapter 7 and 8, it can be concluded that school sport participation in the Netherlands is not related to school bonding, as was hypothesised in chapter 6.

The potential of school sport

The lack of a relationship between school sport participation, sport identity and school bonding does not mean that organising school sport is useless. First, school sport does seem to attract some children that are not a member of a sporting club: 37% in the school sport competition described in chapter 8 and 23% in a large scale study on school and sports in the Netherlands (Stuij, et al., 2011). This means that for these youngsters, school sport does seem to offer an introduction into sports in which they can sample multiple sports. This sampling function of PE and school sport was also found in the study described in chapter 9 and can be considered an important basis on which sport socialisation can build (Macphail, et al., 2003; Macphail & Kirk, 2006). Especially for youngsters lower in SES, this sampling of new sports might serve as an instructional context in which they can be introduced to the rules, techniques and tactics of certain sports (technical aspects of sporting capital) (Stuij, 2013; see also chapter 9). However, based on the findings in this thesis, it can be questioned what the relevance of such an introduction is if they are not introduced to the social aspects of sporting capital. In a similar vein, it can be argued that many government initiatives, 'sport-friendly' neighbourhoods, sport introductions of sport federations and play courts can provide an introduction into sports. This means that many, if not most, children will be introduced to the technical aspects of sporting capital. Nevertheless, the studies in this thesis have shown no indication of the formation of a sport identity during the introduction into sports through school sports. This can be explained by the dominance of the parents in sport socialisation (chapter 9) and the finding that the school context does not offer the opportunity to develop the socio-cultural aspects of sporting capital (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Devís-Devís, et al., 2013; Stuij, 2013; see also chapter 9). Without these aspects of sporting capital, long-term sport participation is not very likely. It would be interesting to study the engagement in sports of participants in school sports and other government initiatives after the specific projects ended. Based on the framework presented in this thesis, it can be hypothesised that not

many will start or continue participating in sports, if they did not participate in sport before the sport stimulation programme started. If sport is not part of the internalised behaviour (sport identity), it is unlikely that sport will become a robust behaviour that becomes part of the identity and is continued in the long run.

However, as said before, the introduction into sports that school sports might offer to some, can be a good basis on which sport socialisation can build. In the Netherlands, this means that school sports should be organised in a way that not only the technical aspects of sporting capital are learned. In order to stimulate the formation of a sport identity, school sports should introduce children to a socially and culturally relevant context of sport participation, in which the socio-cultural aspects of sporting capital can be learned. Given the specific youth sport context in the Netherlands (see chapter 5), this means that school sports should introduce students to the social context of the sporting club. This is possible in different organisational structures that might serve as a starting point for discussing the future of school sports in the Netherlands (Reijgersberg, Lucassen, Pot, & Hilvoorde, 2012). Four possible scenarios can be proposed: (i) school sporting clubs that offer training and competition in different sports, (ii) multiple-sport platforms in which the school can mediate between students and sporting clubs, (iii) school sport events in non-traditional sports (e.g., mud-race; free-running) that focus on participation instead of winning, and (iv) school sport competitions with several local, regional and national rounds (Reijgersberg, et al., 2012). These alternative organisational structures of school sport might increase the potential to influence the sport identity, as they offer more insight into the social connotations of club and competitive sports (Reijgersberg, et al., 2012).

A second way in which school sport can be valuable is the capital that the mere experiences with sport seem to offer. From the notes taken during the studies and informal talks with the participants of the studies presented in this thesis, it can be concluded that the participants considered sport participation or sport experiences to be a status symbol. Participants were very happy to talk about their sport experiences and did this with a lot of pride and enjoyment. In that sense, being sporty acted as a form of capital in itself, which might be converted into other forms of (economic, cultural and social) capital (Driscoll & Wood, 1999; Stempel, 2006). Therefore, the sport experiences during school sport participation might assist in transcending SES stratifications in other spheres of society.

A third merit of school sport is the finding that most students consider it great fun. For instance, participants in the school sport competition described in chapter

8, graded the competition with an 8.8 out of ten (Pot & Hilvoorde, 2011). The importance of having fun and enjoying sports should not be underestimated, as they often serve as motivations to stay engaged in sports (e.g., Allender, et al., 2006). School sports can therefore have the important role in letting children experience the enjoyment that sports can bring. However, in an age of accountability, hard to measure outcomes (such as enjoyment) might be not enough to substantiate the existence of school sport and continue the (financial) endorsement of the government (Feingold, 2013).

Limitations and future research directions

Some limitations of the studies presented in this thesis need to be considered. First, the relationship between habitus, sporting capital and sport identity can be discussed. The concept of sporting capital is used to describe the technical and social/cultural aspects of sport participation. In this thesis, these aspects of sporting capital were expected to have an influence on the sport identity, in a similar way as Bourdieu described capital to influence the formation of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006). It can therefore be suggested that identity and habitus are adjacent concepts (Bottero, 2010; Zevenbergen, 2006). Nevertheless, it was decided to use the concept of sport identity for two main reasons. First, sport identity is more reflexive in response to (new) social contexts that are encountered. Bourdieu (1984) already acknowledged that the habitus is open to change when new social contexts are encountered (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012; Wacquant, 2006). However, habitus is still expected to be strongly dependent on (cultural) inheritance. This appears to contradict with changing sport participation patterns and choices for sport. In this thesis, it was argued that identity, when regarded from identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009), shows a similar influence of the social environment as Bourdieu suggested. In addition, sport identity incorporates the influence that skills have on the identity, albeit in a more flexible manner than suggested by Bourdieu. Second, sport identity was easier to measure using a validated questionnaire (Brewer, et al., 1993; Cieslak, 2004) in contrast to the rather hard to operationalise concept of habitus.

Another point to discuss with regard to the theoretical framework is that the transmission of capital is a rather opaque process that often happens during a longer period of socialisation. Therefore, in order to get a clear understanding of the ways in which sporting capital is acquired, more longitudinal studies are needed. Although the study presented in chapter 8 gives some insight into the process of sport socialisation, more longitudinal studies investigating (changes in)

the process of sport socialisation must be conducted. The absence of a socialising effect of school sport on sport identity, concluded in chapter 8, may be explained by the short duration of the study. However, this does not change anything about the conclusions of the study, as most interventions aimed at increasing sport identity are of short duration as well.

Many other studies in the field of school and sport measure easier to measure outcomes, such as school grades, fundamental movement skills, physical activity (e.g., with a pedometer), sporting club membership or motor skills. However, from a sociological perspective, these variables are not very informative about long-term sport participation. Therefore, in this thesis the incorporation of social context in school sport studies was stressed. This resulted in the use of the concept of *sport identity* that is informative about the chances on long-term sport participation. Trying to measure identity formation and socialisation processes is probably harder and less reliable than measuring the outcomes described before. Nevertheless, studies like the ones described in this thesis are indispensable when trying to increase the validity of school sport studies, as “sports participation is multi-dimensional and the ‘causal’ explanation is likely, therefore, to be multi-factorial” (Green, et al., 2013, p. 11). For that reason a multi-methodological approach was taken in this thesis. Although this increased the external validity, this multi-methodological approach might had a negative impact on the reliability of the studies (Goodwin & Horowitz, 2002). The choice for external validity in favour of reliability was made because the general aim of this thesis was to contribute to a richer and deeper understanding of the determinants of sport participation and the role of the school context therein. In contrast to what sometimes seems to be practice in educational research, it was attempted to measure what is considered valuable, instead of valuing what can be measured easily (Biesta, 2010). Future studies should therefore apply a multi-method, multi-disciplinary approach in order to increase the understanding of sport socialisation.

The studies in this thesis are limited to school sports in the Dutch context. This means that sport socialisation was interpreted as socialisation into organised sports in independent sporting clubs, as that is the main youth sport context in the Netherlands. Given the importance of the cultural context on school sport participation and socialisation (see chapter 6), it can be argued that the relationship between school sports participation, identity formation and school bonding is stronger in countries where sport is more integrated in the school context. However, also in countries where sports have a more prominent place in

the PE curriculum, the school context only has a marginal role in sport socialisation (Devís-Devís, et al., 2013; Evans & Davies, 2010; Green, 2012). However, it has to be noted that these studies focussed more on PE instead of extra-curricular school sports. Given the influence of the cultural context of school sports on the effects that participating in school sports may have, school sport studies should always be interpreted in the light of the cultural context in which the studies were performed. This means that the results of the studies described in chapter 7, 8 and 9 may not be applicable to other countries. Moreover, it is very likely that even other school sport initiatives in the Netherlands generate different results. However, what the studies do show is that the effects expected from school sports are not as straightforward as suggested in policy and that policy-makers and scholars should be aware of the influence of the specific cultural context of school sports (chapter 6). A conclusion that is applicable in a wider context is that results of sport studies should not be 'over generalised' and context specific research is necessary. Therefore, more studies in the specific Dutch (school) sport context should be performed in the future, in order to inform policy and practice in the Netherlands in a reliable way.

It can be argued that other variables than school sport have an influence on how the sport identity can be developed, for instance, religion, ethnicity, sex, PE, neighbourhood characteristics, economic and time barriers and the accessibility of sport facilities. Although some of these potential determinants of sport identity have been discussed in the studies described in chapter 7, 8 and 9, the thesis was mainly focussed on school sports. In chapter 8 and 9, it was indicated that age and ethnic background may have an influence on how sport socialisation takes place. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies should focus on a broader range of socialising contexts and on how they influence people from different ages, sex, ethnic backgrounds and dispositions in sport identity.

Implications for policy and practice

Many governments, including the Dutch, aim at improving the health of youngsters by means of increasing sport participation levels (e.g., European Commission, 2011; Ministry of OCW, 2012). Often, the school has been put forward as a context that can contribute to stimulating sport participation. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis, a relevant question is whether sport participation is healthy all together and whether the amount of physical activity provided during PE and school sport makes a significant contribution to overall physical activity levels

(Gard, 2004). Moreover, there are indications that ('healthy' levels of) physical activity is not as stratified as sporting club membership (Nielsen, et al., 2012). This means that increasing sport participation levels might be of limited value with regard to health goals.

The results of this thesis have some implications for the aim of increasing sport participation for health reasons. In this thesis, it has been argued that long-term sport participation is strongly related to predispositions that have been formed early in life (see part I). Furthermore, it was found that the location of the sporting club (either near the school or at another place) is not related to differences in sport identity (chapter 7), that school sport participation does not stimulate the formation of a sport identity (chapter 8) and that the school is not experienced as a socialising context for sport participation (chapter 9). Therefore, it can be argued that policy interventions aimed at increasing sport participation by means of school sport, at least in the Dutch school sport context, are in vain. Given the strong role of the family in the formation of the sport identity (see chapter 9), it is likely that the family characteristics determine the boundaries within which policy campaigns, school sport or friends can be effective in increasing levels of sport participation or stimulating continued participation in sports (Birchwood, et al., 2008). Green et al. (2013) expressed this as follows:

“Whether or not young people start or stop participating in sport or, for that matter, increase or decrease their levels of participation as they approach and negotiate adolescence and adulthood may very well depend upon pre-dispositions that have been formed earlier in life (Birchwood et al., 2008) rather than any well-meaning policy interventions or, for that matter, lengthened education.” (p.11)

Merely trying to increase sport participation is very likely to be unsuccessful when socio-cultural aspects of sport participation are not recognised (Haycock & Smith, 2011). Therefore, focussing policies and practices aimed at stimulating long-term sport participation on the formation of a sport identity will increase their chances of success. This can be done by incorporating more socio-cultural aspects of sports into school sport and PE, in a wide variety of activities and contexts (Devís-Devís, et al., 2013). Alternative forms of organisation that might lead to the formation of sport identity have been suggested (Reijgersberg, et al., 2012).

Another finding relevant to policy-makers is that socio-economic status might not be a determining factor in how sport socialisation works (chapter 9). This means

that policy interventions aimed at increasing sport participation levels should not merely focus on families and schools in lower SES neighbourhoods and children from lower SES families. Instead, they should focus on youngsters not endowed with sporting capital.

Conclusion

The findings of this thesis can be summarised as follows:

- Sport is more than techniques and tactics, the social context is crucial.
- School sport participation has no influence on sport identity.
- School sport participation appears to be subject to self-selection.
- Sport identity rather than socio-economic status should be the focus of policy.
- In the Netherlands, school sport might influence sport identity if organised differently.
- School sport participation in the Netherlands is not related to school bonding.
- School sport is considered fun. Policy-makers should be careful with expectations beyond mere enjoyment.
- Policy and practice should be informed with context relevant research.

The findings in this thesis might pose a rather pessimistic view on the potential that school sports have for changing sport participation patterns. As sport participation is expected to offer health benefits (e.g., European Commission, 2011; Ministry of OCW, 2012), school sport may not have the effects desired by policy-makers. However, this thesis should not be regarded as a critique to the practice of school sports. It provides insight in the way in which sport socialisation takes place and the potential role that the school context can play in that process. In order to actually contribute to sport socialisation, it is suggested that more of the personal, socio-cultural aspects of sport participation should be incorporated in the organisation of school sports.

There are no indications that school sport, as it is presently organised in the Netherlands, contributes to the development of the sport identity and school bonding of youngsters. This means that school sports, in the broadest sense of the definition, is no omnipotent intervention that stimulates sport participation and school bonding for everyone, everywhere and every time. However, many (school) sport initiatives are considered a lot of fun by the participants, which provides a *raison d'être* in itself. This implies that sport participation should be considered an end in itself, as opposed to a means to an end, as it is commonly used in sport policies in the last decades.

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Summary

Samenvatting

Summary

For a number of reasons sport plays a prominent role in society. According to several scientific studies and conventional wisdom, sport participation can be linked to all kinds of health, social and school related effects. Therefore, a policy aim in many Western European countries is to increase sport participation among young people. However, many projects and studies aimed at sport (participation) tend to reduce sport to mere movement, without any reference to the social context. This leads to the assumption that sport participation can be stimulated by increasing the movement skills that children have. In **part I** of this thesis, the process leading to sport participation is discussed.

In **chapter 1**, the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu and identity theory were used to explain how the social and cultural context of movement can be hypothesised to be invaluable in the process leading to sport participation. Based on these theoretical frameworks, it was hypothesised that the possession of mere movement skills is not enough to explain sport participation.

The intricate interplay between the possession of movement skills and the social and cultural context of movement is further explored in **chapter 2**. A framework that is increasingly used in policy and practice to describe the arsenal of movement skills necessary for physical activity and sports is *physical literacy*. Although the concept of *physical literacy* departs from a holistic view of the human being, it is often interpreted as a framework for *fundamental movement skills*, without a reference to the social or cultural context in which those movements take place. It is argued in chapter 2 that the (dualistic) language used in the conceptualisation of *physical literacy* leaves room for this misinterpretation of the concept. Furthermore, based on the work of Mauss and Bourdieu, it is explained how the concept lacks a reference to the social and cultural context that affects the way in which movements become meaningful. Therefore, it is concluded that a different terminology is necessary in research and policy concerning sport participation. *Sport identity* is proposed as a concept that is more suitable when discussing sport participation, because it unambiguously incorporates the influence of movement skills and the social and cultural context of movement on the role that sport plays in the lives of people. Sport identity has been linked empirically to long-term sport participation. With a reference to the work of Bourdieu, the elements that seem invaluable for sport participation were termed the technical aspects of sporting capital (e.g., sport skills, knowledge about rules and tactics) and socio-cultural aspects of sporting capital (e.g., network of 'sporty' people, knowing social and cultural rules of engagement at sporting clubs, etc.).

It is conceived that both the technical and the social/cultural aspects of sporting capital are necessary to develop a sport identity, which increases that chances of long-term sport participation.

In **chapter 3**, it is explained that *physical literacy* is used in the Netherlands as a framework for fundamental movement skills with the aim of detecting sport talents. This interpretation and use of the concept of physical literacy in the Netherlands is scrutinised on three points. First, based on the philosophical foundations of physical literacy, it can be argued that the social and cultural context have an influence on how movements are learned, executed and become meaningful. However, within the interpretation of *physical literacy* in the Netherlands, the social and cultural context of movement is being neglected. Second, the idea that learning fundamental movements will lead to sport participation is sociologically problematic. Third, the focus on elite athleticism does not seem to be in line with the basic principles of physical literacy that is aimed at participation for all in different kinds of physical activity pursuits, in which everybody can reach his or her own potential, regardless of their level compared to others.

In **part II** of this thesis, it was investigated how the school context might contribute to the formation of a sport identity. The main focus in this part of the thesis is on extra-curricular school sports and not curricular physical education. Although different studies showed that the formation of a sport identity is largely dependent on sporting capital that is inherited through the family, it was hypothesised in **chapter 4** that school sports might also be able to influence the acquisition of sporting capital. As sporting capital is an important aspect of sport identity, school sport participation was expected to be related to the formation of the sport identity. This was expected to be especially true for those who did not inherit sporting capital through their family. Furthermore, based on studies from the USA, it was hypothesised that school sport might contribute to the bond that students have with their school, which might lead to better school results.

Historically, sports have not been integrated in the school context in the Netherlands. This resulted in the organisation of youth sports in sporting clubs that are independent of schools, in contrast to for instance the USA where school sports are more common. Despite the distance between schools and sporting clubs, sport gradually entered the education system in the last part of the 20th century. In **chapter 5**, a history of the development and policy regarding school sports in the Netherlands was described. Current school sport initiatives can be divided in (i) *Sports at school* (sport introduction and orientation within the (PE-) curriculum); (ii) *Sports near school* (opportunities to play sports in and around

the school building without much involvement of the school); and (iii) *Sports representing school* (initiatives in which students from one school represent their school against teams from other schools).

Most of the policy expectations of school sports in the Netherlands were based on studies that investigated school sports in the USA. In **chapter 6**, it was hypothesised that the cultural context of school sports largely determines the organisation and social functioning of school sports, and therefore the effects that participation in school sports may have. To investigate this hypothesis, the Dutch and American school sports systems were described and compared on five elements: the competitiveness, intensity, prestige, status and the use of eligibility criteria. The findings suggest that American and Dutch school sports differ on these five characteristics and that these elements are strongly determined by the cultural contexts of school sports in both countries. It is therefore concluded that the findings of studies investigating school sports should be interpreted in the light of the cultural context in which the studies were conducted and generalisations of research outcomes should be made carefully, in particular if translated to sport policy. This means that research in the Netherlands is necessary to underpin Dutch school sport policy.

At newly developed sport campuses in the Netherlands, sporting clubs and schools are located near each other, without curricular or extra-curricular integration of sports. In **chapter 7**, it was investigated whether the mere proximity of schools and sporting facilities has any influence on the outcomes of young people participating in sporting clubs. Drawing on identity theory, *student identity* was used as a measure of school bonding and *sport identity* as an indication of long-term sport participation in a survey of 140 students, participating either in sporting clubs near their school, other sporting clubs or not playing sports at all. The results showed that sport identity was related to participation in club sports, whereas student identity was not. In addition, the location of the sporting clubs, either at the campus or not, did not affect this relationship. Therefore, it can be concluded that the mere proximity of school and sport facilities is not sufficient to make a difference between sporting clubs at a campus and other sporting clubs.

Although it is often expected that school sport participation leads to all kinds of social, educational and health outcomes, it may also be that students with a certain predisposition are more inclined to participate in school sports and that the 'outcomes' were already present before participation started. In **chapter 8**, a longitudinal survey study was described that investigated whether participation in an elementary school sport competition affected the sport identity and student identity of children (socialisation hypothesis), or whether children with a certain

predisposition were more inclined to participate (selection hypothesis). The results of the study showed that participation in the competition did not alter their sport identity. No relationship existed between participation and student identity. Furthermore, the results indicated that boys and girls with a strong sport identity were more inclined to participate in the school sport competition. In contrast to commonplace assumptions about the socialising effects of school sport participation, the study in chapter 8 suggests that a selected, predisposed group of children with a strong sport identity tends to participate in school sports.

As the quantitative studies in chapter 7 and 8 indicated that participation in school sports was not related to sport identity, it was investigated what social contexts did affect the sport identity in **chapter 9**. Many studies showed lower sport participation levels of youngsters with a lower socio-economic status (SES). Most of these studies focussed on the barriers for youngsters from lower SES families to participate in sport. However, in the study presented in chapter 9, the socialisation into sports of young adolescents from lower SES families that *do* participate in organised sports was investigated. A total of nine girls and twelve boys from lower SES families that participated in organised sport were interviewed about the influences of family, school and peers as socialising contexts for sport participation. Parents were found to be the main influencers of the sport identity of these young adolescents. The school context appeared to have no influence on their sport socialisation. Peers were found to have an influence on the choice for a specific type of sport. These findings show that the sport socialisation of young adolescents from lower SES families is similar to the sport socialisation of youngsters from higher SES families found in other studies. Therefore, it is suggested that SES is not a determining factor in the sport socialisation process. Although fewer children from lower SES families are socialised into sports, the process of socialisation into organised sport does seem relatively independent of social class for young adolescents. This finding has implications for research and policy regarding sport participation levels of youngsters from lower SES families.

In **Part III**, the results of the previous chapters were discussed and conclusions were drawn. In **chapter 10**, it was described that in order to stimulate sport participation, children should learn more than the technical aspects of sports, as the social aspects of sport participation are crucial for sport socialisation. Therefore, the sport identity, instead of mere technical sport skills, should be stimulated in order to increase the likelihood that children will start or continue to participate in sports.

In the second part of this thesis, it was found that sport identity is related to sport participation in general, although not specifically to participation in school sports. Moreover, it seems that students that have already developed a sport identity are more likely to participate in school sports. It seems that parents have a strong influence on the sport identity of their children. Other social contexts, like the school, have only limited possibilities to influence predispositions in sport identity that are inherited through the family. In addition, school sport participation in the Netherlands was not found to be related to school bonding. The finding that the relationship between school sport participation, sport identity and school bonding were different from those found in the USA, can be explained by the fact that school sport participation in the Netherlands is less intensive, competitive and important for the status of students, when compared to school sports in the USA.

The studies in this thesis did provide a more thorough understanding of sport socialisation and the limited role that the school plays in this process in the Netherlands. Moreover, it seems that the process of sport socialisation is relatively independent of socio-economic status. An implication for policy-makers is that school sports should be aimed at developing the sport identity of students, in order to increase the chances of influencing sport participation patterns in the long run. Suggestions were made for different organisational forms of school sports in the Netherlands that might increase the chances of influencing the sport identity. Future studies should investigate whether the new forms of school sport might indeed affect the sport identity and long-term sport participation.

Sportsocialisatie en de rol van de school

Om verschillende redenen speelt sport een belangrijke rol in de samenleving. Een gangbare gedachte is dat sportparticipatie gerelateerd is aan allerlei sociale, academische en gezondheidseffecten, al dan niet ondersteund door verschillende wetenschappelijke studies. Daarom is het ook de ambities van veel Europese landen om de sportparticipatie onder jongeren te verhogen. Een belangrijk gegeven is dat veel projecten en studies die als doel stellen de sportparticipatie te verhogen zich eigenlijk richten op het verhogen van de zogenaamde fysieke activiteit in het algemeen. Hierbij wordt sport gereduceerd tot bewegen, zonder oog voor de sociale context die sport tot een speciaal type activiteit maakt. De veronderstelling is dat sportparticipatie gestimuleerd kan worden door het vergroten van de (sport technische) bewegingsvaardigheden van kinderen. In het eerste deel van dit proefschrift (**part I**) werd het proces dat leidt tot sportdeelname bediscussieerd.

In **hoofdstuk 1** werd op basis van het theoretische werk van Bourdieu en *identity theory* verondersteld dat het proces dat leidt tot sportparticipatie niet los gezien kan worden van de sociale en culturele context waarin bewegingsgedrag plaatsvindt. Daarom wordt dit proces ook wel *sportsocialisatie* genoemd. Op basis van deze theoretische uitgangspunten wordt er verondersteld alleen het vergroten van de (sport technische) bewegingsvaardigheden van kinderen niet voldoende is om de sportparticipatie te verhogen.

Het ingewikkelde samenspel tussen bewegingsvaardigheden en de sociale en culturele context van bewegen werd verder uitgewerkt in **hoofdstuk 2**. *Physical literacy* (*Fysieke geletterdheid*) is een raamwerk dat steeds vaker als uitgangspunt dient voor beleid en praktijk om de bewegingsvaardigheden te beschrijven die nodig zijn voor fysieke activiteit, waaronder sport. Hoewel *physical literacy* uitgaat van een holistische kijk op het menselijke wezen, wordt het vaak geïnterpreteerd als een raamwerk voor *fundamentele bewegingsvaardigheden* (*Fundamental Movement Skills*), zonder een referentie naar de sociale en culturele context waarin die bewegingsvaardigheden plaatsvinden. In hoofdstuk 2 wordt beargumenteerd dat de (dualistische) taal die gebruikt wordt in de conceptualisering van *physical literacy* ruimte biedt voor deze misinterpretatie van het concept. Daarnaast wordt, gebaseerd op het werk van Mauss en Bourdieu, uitgelegd hoe het *physical literacy* ontbreekt aan een referentie naar de sociale en culturele context die zorgen voor de betekenisgeving van bewegingen. Zo wordt een gooibeweging pas betekenisvol wanneer het gekoppeld is aan een doel, bijvoorbeeld het gooien van een bal tijdens een spelletje honkbal. Daarom

wordt er geconcludeerd dat de terminologie van *physical literacy* niet optimaal is voor het gebruik in onderzoek en beleid dat gericht is op sportparticipatie. *Sportidentiteit* wordt naar voren geschoven als een alternatief concept dat meer geschikt is wanneer het om sportparticipatie gaat. Dit concept bevat namelijk de invloed van zowel bewegingsvaardigheden als de sociale en culturele context op de rol die sport speelt in het leven van mensen. In empirische studies is een sterke samenhang tussen sportidentiteit en (langdurige) sportparticipatie aangetoond. Refererend naar het werk van Bourdieu werden de elementen die onmisbaar zijn voor sportparticipatie onderverdeeld in *de technische aspecten van sportkapitaal* (bv. sportvaardigheden, kennis over regels en tactiek) en *de sociaal-culturele aspecten van sportkapitaal* (bv. een netwerk van sport-minded personen, kennis van de sociale omgangsvormen op een sportclub). Er wordt beargumenteerd dat zowel de technische als de sociaal-culturele aspecten van sportkapitaal nodig zijn om een sportidentiteit te ontwikkelen. Het ontwikkelen van zo'n sportidentiteit vergroot de kans op langdurige sportparticipatie.

In **hoofdstuk 3** werd uitgelegd hoe het begrip *physical literacy* in Nederland wordt toegepast als theoretisch raamwerk om de importantie van fundamentele bewegingsvaardigheden te onderschrijven en voor het ontdekken van sporttalent. De interpretatie en het gebruik van het begrip worden op drie punten bediscussieerd. Ten eerste kan er op basis van de (holistische) filosofische uitgangspunten van *physical literacy* beargumenteerd worden dat de sociale en culturele context van invloed zijn op hoe bewegingen worden geleerd, uitgevoerd en betekenis krijgen. Echter, in de interpretatie van *physical literacy* in Nederland worden die sociale en culturele context genegeerd. Ten tweede, het idee dat het aanleren van fundamentele bewegingsvaardigheden leidt tot sportparticipatie is sociologisch problematisch. Ten derde, de nadruk op de detectie van (top)talenten lijkt niet te stroken met de uitgangspunten van *physical literacy*, dat gericht is op deelname voor iedereen aan verschillende activiteiten, waarbij iedereen zijn of haar eigen doelen kan stellen onafhankelijk van een vergelijking met anderen.

In deel 2 van het proefschrift (**part II**) werd onderzocht hoe de schoolomgeving mogelijk kan bijdragen aan het ontwikkelen van de sportidentiteit. De nadruk werd daarbij gelegd op *schoolsport* die buiten het lesprogramma plaatsvindt (zogenaamde 'extra-curriculaire' schoolsport) en niet op de lessen lichamelijke opvoeding. Hoewel verschillende studies laten zien dat *sportkapitaal* vooral overgeërfd wordt door de familie, werd in **hoofdstuk 4** de hypothese geformuleerd dat deelname aan schoolsport ook invloed kan hebben op sportkapitaal. Omdat sportkapitaal een belangrijke voorwaarde lijkt voor het ontwikkelen van een

sportidentiteit, wordt er dus verondersteld dat deelname aan schoolsport samenhangt met de ontwikkeling van de sportidentiteit. Deze samenhang wordt vooral verwacht voor kinderen die minder of geen sportkapitaal van huis uit hebben meegekregen. Een andere verwachting ten aanzien van schoolsport, gebaseerd op Amerikaans onderzoek naar schoolsport, was dat deelname zou bijdragen aan de band die leerlingen met hun school hebben, waardoor zij zich mogelijk meer voor schoolwerk inzetten.

Om historische redenen heeft er lang een moeizame relatie bestaan tussen sport en school in Nederland. Dit heeft ervoor gezorgd dat jeugdsport in Nederland nauwelijks binnen de schoolcontext maar vooral in verenigingen plaatsvindt, in tegenstelling tot de Verenigde Staten waar schoolsport veel gebruikelijker is. Ondanks die historische afstand tussen scholen en sportverenigingen is er sinds het einde van de 20^{ste} eeuw sprake van een geleidelijke integratie van sport in het educatieve systeem. In **hoofdstuk 5** staat die ontwikkeling van schoolsport (-beleid) in Nederland beschreven. Huidige schoolsport initiatieven kunnen worden onderverdeeld in (i) *sport op school* (sportintroductie en -oriëntatie tijdens de lessen lichamelijke opvoeding); (ii) *sport bij school* (mogelijkheden om te sporten op of bij het schoolterrein, zonder dat de school daar echt bij betrokken is); en (iii) *sport namens school* (activiteiten waarbij de leerlingen hun school vertegenwoordigen in wedstrijden tegen leerlingen van andere scholen).

De meeste beleidsverwachtingen ten aanzien van schoolsport in Nederland zijn gebaseerd op studies naar schoolsport in de Verenigde Staten. In **hoofdstuk 6** werd de hypothese geformuleerd dat de culturele context van schoolsport grote invloed heeft op de organisatie en de sociale rol van schoolsport en daarmee op de effecten die schoolsportdeelname kan hebben. Deze hypothese werd onderzocht door het Nederlandse en Amerikaanse schoolsportsysteem te vergelijken op vijf elementen: de competitiviteit, intensiteit, prestige, status van deelnemers en het gebruik van deelnamevoorwaarden. De resultaten van dit onderzoek suggereren dat de Nederlandse en Amerikaanse schoolsport context op al deze vijf elementen verschillen en dat die elementen sterk samenhangen met de culturele context waarin schoolsport plaatsvindt. Er kan daarom geconcludeerd worden dat de uitkomsten van studies naar de effecten van schoolsport gerelateerd moeten worden aan de culturele context waarin de studies gedaan werden. Dit betekent dat de resultaten van studies die in de ene culturele context gedaan werden (bv. Amerika) met grote voorzichtigheid gegeneraliseerd moeten worden naar een andere culturele context (bv. Nederland), zeker als er beleid op die studies gebaseerd wordt.

In de laatste jaren zijn er in Nederland sportcampussen ontstaan, waar scholen en sportverenigingen bij elkaar gelegen zijn. Over het algemeen maken deze scholen zowel binnen als buiten het lesprogramma weinig gebruik van de nabijheid van de sportverenigingen. In **hoofdstuk 7** werd onderzocht of de nabijheid van scholen en sportverenigingen samenhangt met de sportidentiteit en schoolbinding (gemeten als studentidentiteit) van leerlingen. Er werd aan 140 leerlingen gevraagd een vragenlijst in te vullen. Deze leerlingen werden onderverdeeld in een groep die sport op hun campus, een groep die bij andere sportclubs sport en een groep die niet sport. De resultaten lieten zien dat sportidentiteit gerelateerd was aan sportclublidmaatschap. Echter, er was geen verschil waar die sportclub lag, op de campus of ergens anders. De groepen verschilden allemaal niet in de studentidentiteit. Op basis van deze bevindingen kan geconcludeerd worden dat de nabijheid van school en sportfaciliteiten geen verschil maakt in de binding die leerlingen met hun school hebben (studentidentiteit) en de mate waarin zij zich sporter voelen (sportidentiteit).

Hoewel er vaak aangenomen wordt dat deelname aan schoolsport leidt tot allerhande sociale, academische en gezondheidseffecten, kan het ook zo zijn dat een bepaalde groep leerlingen meer geneigd is deel te nemen aan schoolsport. Het kan bijvoorbeeld zo zijn dat leerlingen die al hoger scores op sociale, academische en gezondheidsindicatoren vaker aan schoolsport deelnemen, waardoor de samenhang tussen deelname en die effecten verklaard kan worden. In **hoofdstuk 8** werd een longitudinale studie beschreven waarin onderzocht werd of deelname aan een schoolsportcompetitie voor basisscholen invloed heeft op de sportidentiteit en studentidentiteit van leerlingen (socialisatiehypothese), of dat een bepaalde groep leerlingen meer geneigd is om deel te nemen (selectiehypothese). De resultaten van de studie lieten zien dat de sportidentiteit van deelnemers aan de competitie niet verandert. Er was geen relatie tussen deelname en studentidentiteit. Verder leken de resultaten erop te wijzen dat de deelnemers aan de competitie al een hogere sportidentiteit hadden voor aanvang van de competitie. Deze resultaten lijken erop te wijzen dat een bepaalde groep leerlingen geneigd is om deel te nemen aan schoolsport (selectiehypothese) en dat het dus niet zo is dat schoolsport allerhande effecten veroorzaakt.

Omdat de studies in hoofdstuk 7 en 8 aanleiding gaven om te veronderstellen dat schoolsport geen invloed heeft op de sportidentiteit, werd in **hoofdstuk 9** onderzocht welke sociale contexten dan wel invloed hebben op de sportidentiteit. Er zijn veel studies die onderzocht hebben waarom veel jongeren met een lagere sociaaleconomische status (SES) *niet* aan sport doen. De studie in hoofdstuk 9 richtte zich juist op jongeren met een lagere SES die *wel* aan sport doen. Negen

meisjes en twaalf jongens uit families met een lagere SES die lid waren van een sportvereniging werden geïnterviewd over de invloed van familie, school en vrienden op hun sportgedrag. Ouders hadden voor deze jongeren een grote invloed op de sportidentiteit. De schoolcontext had geen invloed op hun sportidentiteit, wat in lijn is met de bevindingen in hoofdstuk 7 en 8. Vrienden bleken invloed te hebben op de keuze voor een bepaalde sport, maar niet zozeer op het idee dat sport een onderdeel moest zijn van hun leven. Deze invloed van ouders en vrienden lijkt erg veel op de invloed die in eerdere studies is gevonden voor jongeren met een hogere SES. Daarom kan er verondersteld worden dat de SES geen bepalende factor is bij de manier waarop sportsocialisatie plaatsvindt, hoewel er meer kinderen met een hogere SES lid zijn van een sportvereniging. Deze bevinding zou invloed kunnen hebben op het beleid en interventies gericht op het verhogen van de sportparticipatie.

In deel 3 van dit proefschrift (**Part III**) werden de bevindingen uit de voorgaande hoofdstukken bediscussieerd en werden er algemene conclusies getrokken. In **hoofdstuk 10** staat beschreven dat indien het doel is de sportparticipatie te stimuleren, kinderen meer moeten leren dan slechts de technische aspecten van sportkapitaal. De sociale aspecten van sportkapitaal zijn cruciaal voor de socialisatie in de sport. Daarom moeten interventies die het bevorderen van de sportparticipatie als doel stellen zich richten op het stimuleren van de sportidentiteit en niet slechts op het aanleren van technische en tactische aspecten van sport.

In het tweede deel van dit proefschrift werd gevonden dat sportidentiteit gerelateerd is aan sportparticipatie in het algemeen, maar niet specifiek aan schoolsportparticipatie. Sterker nog, het lijkt erop dat jongeren die al een sterkere sportidentiteit hebben eerder geneigd zijn deel te nemen aan schoolsport. Dit kan wellicht verklaard worden doordat ouders een sterke invloed hebben op de sportidentiteit van hun kinderen. Andere sociale contexten, zoals de school, kunnen slechts in beperkte mate die overgeërfde predispositie in sportidentiteit beïnvloeden. Verder lijkt deelname aan schoolsport niet gerelateerd aan de binding die leerlingen met hun school hebben. De bevinding dat de relaties tussen schoolsport deelname, sportidentiteit en schoolbinding in Nederland anders zijn dan in de Verenigde Staten, kan verklaard worden door het verschil in de sociale functie en organisatie van schoolsport.

De studies in dit proefschrift dragen bij aan een beter begrip van sportsocialisatie en de beperkte rol die de school hierin kan spelen in Nederland. Een andere belangrijke conclusie is dat de manier waarop sportsocialisatie verloopt

relatief onafhankelijk lijkt van de sociaaleconomische status. Een implicatie van dit onderzoek voor beleidsmakers is dat schoolsport gericht zou moeten worden op het ontwikkelen van de sportidentiteit van deelnemers, om de kans te vergroten dat schoolsportdeelname de sportparticipatie op de lange termijn beïnvloedt. Dit zou moeten gebeuren door een meer realistische introductie te bieden op de sociale aspecten van sportparticipatie. In hoofdstuk 10 werden verschillende scenario's besproken hoe schoolsport in de toekomst georganiseerd zou kunnen worden om mogelijk en invloed te hebben op de sportidentiteit. In toekomstige studies zou onderzocht moeten worden of deze nieuwe vormen van schoolsport inderdaad invloed hebben op de sportidentiteit en of dit gerelateerd is aan langdurige sportparticipatie.

About the author

Curriculum vitae

Johannes Nicolaas (Niek) Pot was born on July 14, 1984 in Roermond and grew up in Weert (the Netherlands). After finishing (pre-university) high school in 2002 at the 'Bisschoppelijk College Weert' he moved to Utrecht to study Psychology (Utrecht University). In 2007 he obtained his master's degree in Applied Cognitive Psychology with a minor in Musicology. Subsequently he started a pre-master in Human Movement Sciences (VU University Amsterdam), followed by a master in Sport Psychology which he finished cum laude in August 2009.

In October 2009 he started to work at the faculty of Human Movement Sciences (VU University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands) on a research project on school sports, funded by the Mulier Institute. This resulted in a larger research project on school sports in the Netherlands, which commenced in January 2010. At the same time, he joined the research group 'Movement, School and Sports' at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences (Zwolle, The Netherlands), where he conducts applied research in the field of school and sports. Together, these projects resulted in this PhD thesis.

At both institutes Niek lectures in sociology of sport and is involved in research projects about school sports, PE and technology from a psychological and sociological perspective. In May 2013 he obtained his teaching certificate from Windesheim University of Applied Sciences.

List of Publications

Publications marked with an asterisk (*) are part of this thesis

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"Als je de juiste afslagen neemt is het altijd rechtdoor"



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