SPORT-FOR-INCLUSION IN HELSINKI
A FIELD OF TENSION BETWEEN POLICYMAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

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This Master’s thesis explores sport-for-inclusion programmes in the Helsinki capital region, a subject area which has been lacking critical investigation in Finland. The purpose of this study is to give an overview how these programmes are managed and delivered, as well as presenting possible improvements to the current system. There will be an analysis of the role which local NGOs play in the provision of such activities, alongside a discussion of how local authority and governmental actors are trying to promote work in the sector. The hypothesis of this study is that there is a discord between the various players involved in the delivery of these services, and that there is room for the existing strategy behind these programmes to be improved.

International research has taken influence from the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his theory of social capital, which is thought to be generated through participation in inclusionary sports activities. Academics, including Fred Coalter and Ramon Spaaij, have paved the way for future researchers to take a critical approach to the study of these programmes. This, Helsinki-based, study will take inspiration from the international research to conduct an independent, and critical review, of the existing sport-for-inclusion work on-going in the capital region.

Qualitative interviews with 11 key players in the Helsinki sport-for-inclusion arena were conducted in the research process of this study. Additionally, a critical examination of the existing Finnish sports legislature and promotional materials from these programmes helped to formulate an impression of how the system is operating.

In the final discussion of this study it will be revealed that there is a field of tension between the various practitioners and policymakers in the local sport-for-inclusion sector. This is outlined with reference to the interviews and background research presented throughout the study. It is anticipated that the findings and recommendations given in this investigation can make a meaningful contribution to the healthy development of inclusionary sports programmes in the capital region and beyond.
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Introduction: Context and Research Objectives

This study will examine sport-for-inclusion programmes in the Helsinki area, the involvement of local NGOs in this work, and the relationship that these organisations have with state officials. Reference will be made to other European inclusionary sports programmes and studies into their efficiency by way of a secondary literature review. This will help set the scene for an analysis of such activities in the Helsinki context. The data gathered for this study will largely come from qualitative, semi-structured, interviews with both the NGO organisers of these activities and local authority officials. Additional consideration will be given to the existing legislation and policy designed to promote these programmes.

Examples of the organisations used for analysis in this study are 09 Helsinki Human Rights (09HHR), Yökoris, NMKY (Finnish YMCA) and Icehearts. These are all local sports-focused NGOs which receive state and local government funding for the programmes they deliver. This study will profile these organisations and provide context in to the work they do, and how this informs the interviewee responses. Alongside these NGO operations, there will be discussion of City of Helsinki run sports-for-inclusion projects. These serve as suitable case studies for the purpose of this research project as they each have the aim of including various marginalised groups through the means of sport.

The issues of managing multiculturalism and social inclusion are topical themes within the Nordic context and around the globe. Initiatives to promote youth engagement and community-cooperation through sport are gaining momentum on national and multinational levels. This trend is also identifiable in the Finnish social landscape, particularly within the capital region, which is home to the highest number of foreign nationals in the country. In 2013 it was reported that approximately half of all Finland’s foreign-language residents live in the Helsinki area.¹ Last year the percentage of Helsinki inhabitants that have a foreign background grew to 14.3%.² Given these growing shifts in demographics, new programmes

have been developed to socially include foreign background residents through sport and other activities.

Previous research has shown that there is a danger of social exclusion of minority groups in Helsinki who are largely concentrated in neighbourhoods in the north and east of the city, and are at risk of ethnic segregation.³ Sports initiatives have gained increased popularity around Europe as they are perceived as a viable method of reducing social inequalities, offering a platform where city residents of different backgrounds can interact.⁴ The growing number of inclusionary sports programmes in the Finnish capital is evidence of this change.

This study will analyse the provision of sport-for-inclusion programmes at a local level, while referring to current international trends, paying particular attention to relations between state officials and NGOs. Previous studies in Helsinki have focused on more restricted issues such as the role of sport in cultural integration and the outcomes for participants in these activities.⁵ The intention here is to examine these programmes and policy from a wider viewpoint that includes a discussion of how these projects are coordinated and funded. Later we will highlight possible improvements that could be made to the existing system from the interviewees.

1.1 Motivation and Development of the Research

The initial interest in sport-for-inclusion stems from experience volunteering in sports activities for asylum seekers in the autumn of 2015. Arriving in Finland as an international student from Scotland, there was a motivation to learn more about how these programmes are being coordinated and who the main players were locally. Through the initial participation in these activities it was possible to establish contacts from the organisations 09 Helsinki

Human Rights (09HHR) and NMKY (Finnish YMCA) who provided a starting point from which to develop a list of interviewees for this study.

In the summer of 2016, this author undertook a two-month internship with local sports NGO ‘09HHR’. During the time with the organisation, there was scope for learning about the work the organisations coordinates from their Mellunmäki base. In the summer months, 09HHR coordinates a summer day camp for local children and also informal sports activities for children in, what may be termed as, socially deprived areas of Eastern Helsinki. In 2016 it was reported that 28% of all residents with a foreign mother tongue lived in the Easter Major District in Helsinki, which explains the focus of multicultural NGOs in this area of the city. This work experience peaked this scholar’s interest in how sport-for-inclusion programmes are managed in the Helsinki area.

Initially, the intention for this study was to take a participant focus which would look at the individual consequences of these activities. However, through further examination of the sport-for-inclusion programmes operating environment in Helsinki, it became clear that that there was a cluttered landscape of activities on offer. It was concluded that it would be more beneficial to speak with organisers about the coordination and structural framework behind these services. By taking such an approach, this study presents a new and informative perspective on a sector that has been understudied in the Finnish context. The field of sport-for-inclusion itself is a relatively modern discipline and researchers have not yet cast a critical light on the programmes that are underway locally. The time is now appropriate for a study of this nature and a revision of the existing international research which can contribute to a constructive debate on these programmes.

There is a particular interest in the relationship between local NGOs and officials at government level, in terms of funding and management of these services. Both play an instrumental role in the provision of these programmes, with state funding an integral contribution for the viability of such work. However, the dynamic between the two is not clear and it is hoped to uncover to what extent the two are working together to formulate these

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programmes. The review of the literature, and criticisms of sport-for-inclusion, will include examples of how these relationships are developing in other countries, alongside a multitude of contemporary issues in the field. This critical backdrop could prove very useful to Finnish actors operating in the sphere. In spite of the international prevalence of sport-for-inclusion policy, it would appear that there is often a lack of knowledge about the work being carried out locally in Helsinki, even between the various players in the field. This should be addressed to ensure that best practices are shared and that an effective strategy for inclusionary sports programmes can be developed.

1.1.1 Volunteering Experience

As previously mentioned, the author of this paper undertook an internship with 09HHR in the summer of 2016 at their ‘ME-Talo’ community centre in Mellunmäki, and in other areas of Eastern Helsinki. During the autumn semester of 2016 several visits were made to Kauniainen, Espoo to observe an indoor football project for asylum seekers, also run by 09HHR. However, on these occasions no asylum-seeker participants were in attendance. This reflects the fact that many asylum seekers who arrived in Helsinki in the period 2015-2016 have since been relocated to bases in the north of Finland or have received negative decisions in response to their claims for asylum. Furthermore, the number of asylum seekers arriving in Finland in 2016 was significantly less than that in the previous year. Consequently, the total number of asylum seekers in Helsinki reception centres has decreased.

Throughout the spring of 2017 this researcher has been actively participating in an informal volleyball session in the city centre which is run by Yökoris and NMKY (Finnish YMCA), in collaboration with several church organisations. The sports programme is intended for asylum seekers in the city centre as well as the volunteers who take part. Additionally, visits were made to see several other projects operating in the capital area. Participating in these informal sports sessions provided an insight into how local NGOs are collaborating to provide sports activities with relatively little resources. It also proved useful to network building in this sector and opportunities were provided to meet many of the key players working in the

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Helsinki area. Through participation and monitoring at these sports sessions, it was possible to build rapport with organisers, participants and volunteers.

Having a good rapport with this core-base of local NGOs helped when initially scheduling interviews and starting the research process for this study. Conflicts of ethics or dangers of impartiality have been removed by maintaining a critical and independent standing point. There are no compromising ties between this researcher and any of the organisations used in the analysis of this study and, as such, can approach the subject in a fully objective manner.

1.2 Hypothesis

Going into this study, the hypothesis is that the supporting networks, resources and national funding opportunities available to local authorities and NGOs are not well publicised, which has led to a fragmentation in the provision of sport-for-inclusion services. By interviewing those key players in the field, including coaches/trainers, policymakers and state officials, it is hoped to be able to unravel the puzzle over how these services are delivered, funded, monitored and evaluated. It will be highlighted that collaborative efforts to offer sport-for-inclusion activities are limited, with many local players taking responsibility for these programmes on an individual basis. Furthermore, the manner in which funding is advertised and administered does not make for the most efficient delivery of services.

Examples will be provided to exemplify that some of these inclusionary sports programmes have a specified target group and are not as all-inclusive as they market themselves to be. Through taking a critical approach to the subject it will be possible to identify current trends from the sport-for-inclusion currently projects operating in Helsinki. Furthermore, a review of the promotional materials coming from these programmes will reveal how these can contain unsubstantiated claims or biases. These materials should be put under scrutiny by academic researchers in order to evaluate the extent to which the organisations are meeting the objectives set out and further a debate on the theme.

The large quantity of legislation and policy relating to sport-for-inclusion in Finland is a positive development which will be considered in the research. However, it is anticipated that the scope and influence of such legislation is limited. As in other Nordic countries, within Finland there is a strong reliance on civil actors and voluntary groups to carry out inclusionary
sports programmes. Legislation alone will not ensure the quality and number of organisations involved is sufficient to meet the increasing demand in Helsinki.

This paper will put forward with recommendation that recognition should be given to the NGOs who conduct this work with little support from state-level actors. This could take the form of greater collaborative efforts and a better tapping-in to the pool of knowledge these workers have. Existing infrastructures developed by these non-governmental actors, such as a multicultural coach education programme, should be used to their full potential, to compliment funding grants and a wider sharing of knowledge across the board.

Later in this paper, we will see a discussion of possible improvements to the current system, as suggested by the interviewees themselves, who are experienced players in the field locally. The suggestions are wide-ranging and offer a valuable insight in to how the future of these services could be shaped. This wealth of knowledge should be drawn upon to ensure the healthy and progressive growth of inclusionary sports activities in the Helsinki area.

This research project will demonstrate that there is a field of tension between the Finnish actors operating in the sport-for-inclusion sphere, namely between those NGOs, local authority service providers and the government level (Ministry of Education and Culture). These tensions are characterised by a confusion and lack of coordination that is having an adverse influence on the outcome of these projects and the response to the demand for these programmes. The larger structuring of these activities should be reviewed, with a greater collaboration between state and non-state actors. It is hoped that this could lead to a more efficient strategy of inclusionary sports programmes in the capital region where such work is needed to encourage the healthy growth of multiculturalism.
2 The Finnish Case in a Nordic and Global Perspective

Finland has historically had less experience of migration than its Nordic neighbours and it is true to say that multiculturalism is a relatively new phenomenon here. The last few years have seen a large increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving in the country with statistics illustrating that over 32,000 asylum seekers arrived in Finland in 2015.\(^8\) In response to such demographic changes we are now in an era where actors within and outside of government are pushing an agenda of diversity, social inclusion and anti-racism which extends to the realm of sports and beyond.

Efforts are being made to combat a rise in race hate crimes and social fragmentation.\(^9\) In a demonstration held last year over 15,000 Helsinki residents gathered to oppose the rise in right-wing extremist groups and violent acts perpetrated by these groups. Furthermore, one of the interviewees used for this project, Michaela Moua, has recently featured as an ambassador for a new campaign to tackle racism on public transport. Michaela is also a member of another anti-racism organisation called Walter Ry, which uses ex-professional sports players to speak with school children about issues of race.\(^10\) These developments illustrate changes in pro-diversity policy, which is shaping the social landscape in Helsinki. In particular, there has been a trend of providing inclusionary sports activities for immigrant-background women and after school club activities for children in areas with high concentrations of ethnic minorities.

In recent years, there has been a drive from City authorities and the governing body at the Ministry of Education and Culture (OKM) to provide and encourage the organisation of sport-for-inclusion programmes which have the purpose of integrating newcomers to Finland.\(^11\)

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These have been implemented in response to recent demographic shifts and to promote the social inclusion of minority groups. There are now a variety of funding opportunities for both local authorities and other organisations whose activities have an emphasis on sport for integration of asylum seekers and immigrants, which are listed on the OKM website.\(^{12}\)

Traditionally, sport has played an integral role in the social life of Finns and the country has one of the highest sport participation rates in the whole of Europe. Studies have emphasised that in the population over 15 years old, the percentage of those practicing sport at least once a week in Finland is 76%.\(^ {13}\) However, membership and material costs of joining private sports clubs has proved as a barrier to sport for low-income families in Finland. This financial exclusion also presents barriers to immigrants and asylum seekers, who should also have the opportunity to engage in sporting activities and are likely to face tighter financial constraints than their Finnish compatriots. There are now a number of organisations aiming to tackle this problem with a concentration on low-threshold sports activities for both adults and children. This thesis will discuss the various ways in which these organisations attempt to do so and how they go about securing funding from the various administrative bodies applicable.

In light of the growing popularity of sport-for-inclusion programmes, there has also been an acceptance that racism remains prevalent in Finnish sports and that action must be taken to combat this trend.\(^ {14}\) Last year a seminar was held in Helsinki on the use of sport as a tool for social integration, which again reflects the growing social interest in this work.\(^ {15}\) Europe-wide conferences and seminars on the theme further demonstrate the growing popularity of the discipline and moves to share best practices across international networks.

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This study will discuss the relationships between the various actors involved in the provision of sport-for-inclusion services in Helsinki. It will be revealed that these relationships have not led to the most efficient working practices and that steps should be taken to address these concerns. Despite the growing popularity of this work and the number of organisations involved in delivering these services, there is relatively little critical research in the field as we have seen in the international arena. There is a necessity for this kind of work and this study is intended to add to the developing discourse and debate in the field.

3 Previous Research on Sport-for-Inclusion

As the theme of sport-for-inclusion is a relatively new discipline it was essential to carry out extensive background reading in the area to strengthen this author’s overall understanding of the topic. For practical purposes, this section has been divided to highlight influential articles featured in international publications, studies from a Nordic perspective, and research conducted in the Helsinki area. Where required there are notes on the terminology used and evaluation methods which are often discussed in the literature. From a Finnish standing point, it is particularly valuable to review the strengths and shortcomings of programmes that have been developed in other Nordic countries.

Academics in the international field of sports sociology have often adopted a critical approach in their studies of sport-for-inclusion programmes and the wider policy that these are based upon. There is a much greater quantity of critical research in the international arena, including studies carried out in other Nordic countries, compared to the availability of critical discourse coming from Finland. Here it is important to highlight just some of the criticisms that academics have raised about the rhetoric and delivery of these projects at a global level, before we turn our attention to those studies which focus on the Nordic context.

In the field of sports sociology, there are inconsistencies in the use and interchanging of the two terms, sport-for-development and sport-for-inclusion. It is generally understood that the former refers to overseas projects with a goal of economic development while the latter is more apt for describing local projects that have some goal of social integration for minority
groups. In the literature, one can quickly notice that the terms are often confused, even by experienced academics researching the field. What is clear is that one term cannot be completely separated from the other. Sport-for-inclusion is the focus of this research paper but the study discipline would not exist without previous analysis of development work abroad, and publications on it. When dealt with in the international context, policy is often referred to as sports development policy or SDP for short.

Fred Coalter is one of the most often cited academics in the field of sports sociology, especially in the UK, and he has featured heavily in the background reading. In many of his recent publications, Coalter has questioned the global flux of praise for sport-for-inclusion initiatives despite the lack of concrete evidence of positive results from such projects. He outlines his scepticism by referring to what he terms “inflated promises in marginal policy areas”. In other words, Coalter believes there is a tendency to exaggerate the benefits that can be drawn from such policy. An example of the proliferation of sports in current global development policy is their inclusion in the achievement of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals.

Coalter identifies a recent transformation in the minds of policy-makers and academics in the past decade in how they view sport as a tool for developing communities. He states that there has been “a shift from the welfare approach of developing sport in the community, to seeking to develop communities through sport”. Sport has taken centre-stage in many community regeneration projects throughout Europe, since the start of the new millennium and before, often with mixed results. Following Coalter, academics ought to be “theorising its limitations as well as outlining its potential”. There is a perception that researchers in the field have not

20 Ibid., 22.
been duly critical of these projects. While Coalter is clearly in favour of sport-for-inclusion projects, his scepticism prevents him from making unsubstantiated promises about the social change that can be brought about through this work. His many articles serve as a warning to over-enthusiastic policy-makers who fail to take account of existing research when planning new sport-for-inclusion projects.21

Negative repercussions of inclusionary sports projects are dealt with by several of the authors featured in the same Social Inclusion journal. Kingsley and Spencer-Cavaliere make the point quite transparently that “…sport remains a site of social exclusion”.22 In this study, the authors examine the relationship between household income and youth experience in sport. They find that “young people who live with lower incomes are known to experience social exclusion from and within sport”.23 Despite the well-intentioned goals of such projects, there is always the risk that sport can promote further social exclusion. Therefore, we must be wary of making broad-reaching claims that sport always acts as a beneficiary force or an indisputable community-forming exercise.

Many of the authors featured in the above-mentioned journals are critical of the manners, or measurement systems, in which such sport-for-inclusion projects have been evaluated, often in terms of social capital. Indeed, it is difficult to put a strict measurement on the social skills, bonds and friendships that can be fostered through sport. Some academics, like Fred Coalter, have focused on the paradox between the extensive volumes of government policy advocating sport for social change, while relatively little research or concrete results have been published. At this stage, it is fitting to introduce the concept of social capital and the controversies over its use as an evaluation tool in this field.

3.1 Social Capital in Sport

Throughout many of the scholarly articles on sport-for-inclusion, there is discussion of the social capital that can be established and built upon through these programmes. Put in simple

23 Ibid.
terms, social capital is about the social ties, networks and relationships that can be generated through participation in a given project. The concept is most associated with the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and has since been adapted by researchers and academics in the field. Sport is most often associated with the social ties that can be fostered through these kinds of activities.

Bourdieu wrote that sporting institutions were caught up in issues of social class, dominance and power struggles which were symbolised in the three categories of economic, cultural and social capital. Social institutions, including in the arena of sports, can “produce and reproduce lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits”. Bourdieu has emphasised the role of social class in the reproduction and/or acquisition of social capital, with dominant classes able to exert power through the powerful networks they have access to. “From the Bourdieuan perspective, social capital becomes a resource in the social struggles that are carried out in different social arenas or fields”.

Robert Putnam is a leading US political scientist who has developed his own adaptation of social capital theory. He has argued that social networks, voluntary organisations and civic actors also play a large role in the potential social capital that can be established within a region or institution. Putnam has focused on the role of trust between citizens and civic institutions, rather than the symbolic class representations in which Bourdieu concentrates his thesis. “Putnam’s central thesis is that if a region has a well-functioning economic system and a high level of political integration, these are the result of the region’s successful accumulation of social capital”.

Despite controversy over how social capital is produced and symbolised, the conception features heavily in the literature, particularly those studies which discuss the benefits and evaluation techniques used in sport-for-inclusion. Questioning the potential benefits that can

25 Ibid., 87.
be drawn from such programmes is part of the duty we share as critical researchers and we must be wary of reports that present a one-sided view of these programmes. A theoretical approach which incorporates those concerns outlined by Bourdieu and Putnam is best fitting for analysing the implications of such work.

Dutch-Australian professor Ramón Spaaij has found that social hierarchies and inequalities related to gender, sexuality, race and nationality are reinforced in sport. He describes this process as ‘institutionalised inequalities’. Spaaij has also evaluated the aims and outcomes of a sport and vocational programme, called SSP, in Rotterdam, Netherlands. SSP is representative of new initiatives which incorporate sport and vocational experience to address the issue of social exclusion. It has been an influencer of other such projects around Europe, and Spaaij has covered many of the pressing issues facing a sports-intervention programme of this kind. The article is one of the most detailed reviews of an inclusionary sports programme uncovered in the international literature.

The programme is targeted at disadvantaged urban youth in a particularly deprived area of the city, with the goal of improving their social standing through sport and qualifications which enable to work as stewards at sporting events. The project aspires to transform the lives of the participants, however Spaaij states that evidence gathered thus far has shown participants have attained “relatively modest increases in cultural, social and economic capital” through their involvement. The author highlights the paradox in the widespread assumption that sport contributes to social capital despite the confused interpretation by academics and researchers of what the term actually entails.

Despite the well intentioned aims of the project, improving the social position of participants, Spaaij warns that this upward mobility process cannot be taken for granted. He claims that we should not dismiss the influence of ‘hard indicators’ which have a huge bearing over an individual’s social position and/or capability for social mobility. Occupation, educational

attainment and family background are all factors which fall under the heading of ‘hard indicators’ and cannot be readdressed through such sports intervention programmes.\textsuperscript{31}

Following his reading of Pierre Bourdieu, Spaaij outlines $bonding$, $bridging$ and $linking$ social capital’s which can perform a multitude of roles in improving a person’s social mobility. The author suggests that such sports programmes are best suited to deal with bridging forms of capital, with an emphasis placed on the networks that are fostered through such programmes. These networks can allow a person to make improvements to their social standing and chances of gaining employment.\textsuperscript{32}

Critically, the author questions the larger aims of the project and for whom the success of such an initiative is desirable, the participants or the local authorities. Spaaij warns us that “a sense of moral outrage and fear informs the actions of local authorities, who try to educate and discipline those who are deemed, ‘dangerous’, ‘troublesome’ or ‘at risk’”.\textsuperscript{33} In Rotterdam the two target groups for such projects are termed as “potentially troublesome youth and ethnic minorities”.\textsuperscript{34} Under this critical light, we might say that the success of such a project is in the greater interest of the local authorities as a controlling mechanism for maintaining social order.

Spaaij demonstrates the different forms of capital at play in such sports based intervention projects. Furthermore, it is evidence of the way in which sport is increasingly playing a bigger role in the “neoliberal policy repertoire of cities like Rotterdam aimed at generating social order in disadvantaged inner-city neighborhoods”.\textsuperscript{35} The Netherlands may be a frontrunner when it comes to projects of this nature, but with inclusionary sports policy growing ever more popular, we are likely to see the development of such initiatives across a wider spectrum in the near future.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 252.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 263.
Simon Darnell is a leading sports and international development researcher who has used Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism in his examination of the narratives found in the field of sport for development and peace, which he refers to as SDP. He outlines the Orientalist notions of Othering which are evident in the inclusionary sports framework and also precipitates in to the rhetoric of policy and media production. Darnell describes how Western colonisers originally used sport to exert their dominance over the colonised locals. Following the author, this power dynamic has evolved over time and continues to hold influence over how sports development programmes are formulated today. As he states, “…these forms of knowledge production in SDP have implications for the maintenance of imperialism, racial hierarchies and global relations of inequality”.

Darnell uses an article titled ‘Sports Saves the World’ from the publication Sport in Society to give examples of the language and rhetoric common in such media. Throughout the magazine article under scrutiny, the journalist in question draws on imperialist notions of how the benevolent Westerner is helping the underdeveloped Other to better his life chances. Following the author, “race and racism are fundamental to such constructions”.

Taking such a critical approach to the discipline of sports sociology is pertinent to the development of research in this discipline. Later, we will see this study reveal that Darnell’s criticisms have direct relevance for consideration in the Finnish context, particularly in the rhetoric used between organisers of inclusionary sports programmes. The article illustrates how researchers and practitioners in the area would benefit from adopting a more critical lens and stay clear of falling into Saidian concepts of the Orient. It serves as a warning that sports policy and sport-for-inclusion activities can often have a basis in Orientalist constructions of Othering which can have a huge impact on the outcome of such projects.

3.2 Nordic Research

At this point it is necessary to turn our attention to research that has been carried out in neighbouring Nordic countries, as it provides an informative context within which to place

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38 Ibid., 1007.
this Helsinki-based study. A number of recent inclusionary sports programmes have been implemented by our Nordic neighbours, as will be exposed. Shared trends across the Nordic countries, such as recent increases in the number of asylum seekers and a high concentration of voluntary organisations involved in the delivery of sports services, mean that comparisons across the countries are more fitting that those from elsewhere in Europe. The latest studies published from Denmark and Norway, in particular, offer insights in to themes that have a particular relevance to the Finnish context.

A recent study by Engh et al., published in 2013, examines the transnational power relations and processes of inclusion and exclusion in group relationships at youth football tournaments in Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The study draws upon previous research by Elias and Scotson, which looked at established-outsider relations in the realm of sports.\(^{39}\) They explain how “to maintain their own ‘power surplus’ and position of domination, established groups proceed to exclude and stigmatize outsider groups, so as to keep them firmly in their subordinate positions”.\(^{40}\)

The authors find that “status, prestige, power and control underpin established-outsider relations”.\(^{41}\) If the larger, established group in the context of these activities is not multicultural or multi-ethnic in its make-up it can cause an incurable division between the group dynamics. This can lead to the further marginalizing of smaller groups who are meant to feel socially included through the process of these sporting events. We will later see how local organisations are educating coaches in multicultural issues and using trainers from multicultural backgrounds in an attempt to overcome these problematic issues of group dynamics.

South African sports sociologist Mari Haugaa Engh (based in Denmark) and her international co-writers have stated that “questions of power, culture and control are thus at the heart of

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\(^{41}\) Ibid., 784.
global sport processes”. Power is at play in sporting events, whether they be local or international, and ought to be taken into consideration in any analysis of sport-for-inclusion work. In a similar manner to Darnell’s work, the authors here cite a background in colonial representations of sport as forming popular discourse in inclusionary sports policy. Their findings show how established-outsider power relations at these sporting events can, for the established group, “…reaffirm their own sense of group prestige while inadvertently… confirming the outsider status of the ‘other’”.

Inter-group relations offer another perspective of theorising sport-for-inclusion activities and their evaluation. In the field of sport-for-inclusion there is always a risk of further marginalisation, and stigmatisation, of the group intended to benefit from such activities. Furthermore, the events and tournaments used in the analysis for this study have been hailed by the international community as being exemplary of good practice in the field. The UN is now cooperating with the Norwegian Cup, which illustrates the international significance of the tournament despite the problematic group dynamics identified by Engh et al.

3.3 Role of Voluntary Organisations and Civic Actors

Other Nordic studies have focused on the role of voluntary organisations in providing sport-for-inclusion activities. A Norwegian study by Ørnulf Seippel has examined the social capital that can be gained from volunteering in sports organisations. It is found that “being a member of a voluntary sport organisation seems to contribute to generalised trust”. The research paper in question looks at the social capital which can be developed between those volunteers in sports organisations. In his findings, Seippel discovers that there are numerous social capital benefits to the volunteers and organisers of these activities. Alongside other

42 Ibid., 783.
suggestions for further research the author states, “One aim should be to compare different national cases in order to better understand the effect of institutional contexts on processes where social capital is formed and developed”.47 Thus, a sharing of knowledge across countries could be beneficial to all players in the sector to better understand how social capital is produced and managed through such inclusionary sports programmes.

Danish social anthropologist and sports specialist Sine Agergaard has researched the themes of integration and sport in her hometown of Aarhus and beyond. She states that in Denmark “…the political expectation is that the cultural adaptation of ethnic minorities to so-called Danish values and norms can be fostered by civil society actors like the Danish sports organisations”.48 Agergaard notes a tendency to rely on civil actors and NGOs rather than state provided services to deliver sport-for-inclusion activities.

Agergaard also highlights the disparity between the different goals the groups of volunteers who help to organise these activities. She states “…range from youth policy with sports as criminality prevention to social policy through education, and from cultural assimilation to civil integration…The challenge is then to join together (assemble) the different ideas against the backdrop of the different material elements (capacities/resources)”.49 Sports can play a role in many of these differing policy areas and the specific aims of the project should be agreed upon to ensure that the outcomes do not become confused and disorganised.

The authors go on to outline the growing trend of “… non-state actors being rooted in and driven by a civil society rationality … to become self-governing managers of welfare state policy”.50 This trend is referred to as ‘government at a distance’. Agergaard and her colleagues highlight that such sport-for-inclusion projects are taking place in Denmark only through the work and determination of civic actors in the field. Again, Denmark is a country that has a longer history of immigration and integration projects than Finland has had. Nonetheless, lessons can be learned from the experience, and trends identified, by our Nordic neighbours.

49 Ibid., 30.
50 Ibid.
Nordic research into the theme has outlined the important role that voluntary organisations play in the delivery of inclusionary sports programmes. Academics have noted how governments are increasingly devolving the responsibility of such projects to civic actors. These are key trends to acknowledge when approaching the theme from a Finnish perspective, where many socio-political and economic circumstances are shared.

3.4 Previous Research in Helsinki

The available research into the field of sport-for-inclusion in Helsinki is very limited; as such, there is a demand for a study in to this work and the potential to contribute to an area that has been scarcely examined. The scarcity of research into this important and developing area of social inclusion reinforces the merits of exploring the topic. It is hoped that the research presented in this paper can make a meaningful contribution to the discourse.

Other, policy-focused studies have highlighted the lack of a strategy for integrating Finland’s increasingly multicultural youth through youth services and leisure activities. The authors of one report note that: “sports... is one leisure arena where multicultural youth often feel welcome and multicultural coexistence can emerge”.\(^5\) However, the report finds that Finnish youth services should be improved and that “…the inequalities in our youth leisure communities should not be ignored. In spite of many multicultural openings, there is still ethnically based discrimination in both the formal and the informal sphere of our youth leisure activities”.\(^6\) Other studies have also called for a revision of youth services to reflect growing demographic changes in Finland.\(^7\) Following the conclusions of these studies, youth policy can be a driving force for social inclusion and anti-racism work.

Elsewhere, international praise for Finnish sports policy has commended the country for its focus on sports-for-all programmes and strategies which are not wholly focused on elite-sports.\(^8\) Scottish sports sociologist Grant Jarvie praised the equality-driven Finnish sports

\(^{51}\) Harinen, Päivi et al: Multiculturalism and Young People’s Leisure Spaces in Finland: Perspectives of Multicultural Youth, in: Leisure Studies 31, no. 2 (2012), 177-191, 188.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 189.


laws as far back as 2003.\textsuperscript{55} While this praise is a positive development, much of this research is gathered by taking a country overview of larger sports policy, rather than concentrating on those projects which operate locally. In other words, the author does not present a balanced view of how these programmes are unfolding locally.

A recently published MA thesis by Pia Grochowski deals with ex-pat/immigrant women, their involvement in sport, and how this played a role in their integration to life in Finland. The study highlights the development of recent women-specific inclusionary sports programmes which have emerged in Helsinki. In her theoretical introduction to the study the author states that in the literature "...there is little reference in the functionalist-heavy domain of sports for integration of the 'dark' side of social capital, the fact that it can promote exclusion".\textsuperscript{56} She makes reference to Bourdieu’s theory of social capital and the possible negative outcomes of sport-for-inclusion activities. Grochowski states that while, "It is certainly true that the link between sports and social capital is strong, but building social capital is not always entirely positive: social capital can bring groups very tightly together, but also introduces the risk of excluding others".\textsuperscript{57}

In her research findings Grochowski writes; “the evidence supported by the migrant women shows that regardless of one’s passion for athleticism and will to integrate, sports may not always be a tool for integration".\textsuperscript{58} On the other hand, the author also notes signs of positive social change from the interviews she carried out; “a key development appeared in the narratives: an increased level of overall acceptance that foreigners are part of Finland's future - and consequently, an increased willingness to engage in a two-way integration process".\textsuperscript{59} The author believes that Finland is coming to accept its multiculturalism and responsibility to engage in the integration process. This theme will be reflected upon in section 5 of this paper.

\textsuperscript{56} Grochowski, Pia: Will it make me an insider? Migrant women’s participation in sports in the Helsinki area, MA diss., University of Helsinki, (2015).
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 62.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 64.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
Further research emerging from the University of Helsinki has adopted a similar theme to that of Seippel in Norway, by focusing on the social capital that can be formed through volunteering. Eeva Lindström has examined voluntary associations working with immigrants in the Finnish capital.\textsuperscript{60} The author finds that these associations and volunteers play a fundamental role in a two-way integration process. Lindström’s investigation is evidence of the growing interest in NGO work in the capital region, and the capacity of these organisations to build a framework for social inclusion.

Tuomas Zacheus is a Turku based researcher who has published journal articles dealing with the role that sport has played in the acculturation process of migrants in Finland. Findings from his study revealed that “sport was seen as playing an important role in teaching the Finnish language and culture and in increasing feelings of self-respect and well-being to immigrants and to wider immigrant networks”.\textsuperscript{61} However, much of the research in this study was taken from interviews with activity organisers rather than immigrant participants themselves. While such a result appears positive, it is misleading to come to such conclusions without due consultation with the participants. Such research limitations have been duly noted and this paper does not seek to make claims on the outcomes participants, as highlighted in section 1.1 dealing with the development of the research. From the outset of this paper it has been emphasised that the research will take an organiser focus, with the majority of the results coming from interviews to avoid this ambivalence.

Zacheus and his colleagues have since published further studies from the Turku based Institute of Migration. The majority of these research papers are written in Finnish.\textsuperscript{62} Given the topical relevance of the subject, seminars on good practices and the number of international figures involved in its development within Finland, it is surprising that such little research is available in English on the subject. Again, the scarcity of critical research published

\textsuperscript{60} Lindström, Eeva: Voluntary Work as a Form of Social Capital and as a Tool for Inclusion and Integration, MA diss., University of Helsinki, (2016).
\textsuperscript{62} Zacheus, Tuomas et al: Maahanmuuttajataistaiden nuorten toisen asteen koulutusvalinnat, in: Yhteiskuntapolitiikka no.82 (2017)
in this field provides fertile ground for a study in to the area. There is a chance to make a valid addition to the debate surrounding these topics in the Helsinki/Finland context.

3.5 New Research Perspectives

Here it is useful to reflect on the main trends which have been identified in the international research considered in the previous section of this research paper. The publications covered suggest that we are headed toward a future in which academics will be duly critical in their study of sport-for-inclusion and country policies. Research in the discipline of sport-for-inclusion may be a relatively recent development, but it would be appear that more and more critical work is being published, with the path being led by established authors such as Fred Coalter and Ramon Spaaij.

The benefits of inclusionary sports programmes, for both participants and organisers, have been outlined in Finland, Norway and Denmark. Relative gains in social capital were noted from the Dutch example Spaaij has critiqued. The growing popularity of these programmes has meant that more research is being developed in the Nordic countries.

Following the work of these international critics we should look more at the limitations of sport-for-inclusion projects and be aware of the boundaries of such work. Factors such as intergroup and power relations can have a huge bearing on the success of sport-for-inclusion initiatives. As actors and researchers in the field we cannot deny the existence of, or potential for, negative outcomes from these programmes. It should be accepted that these activities can, in fact, contribute to the social exclusion of some already marginalised groups as has been reported in the international studies we have seen.

The work of these academics suggests that policy itself should come from a more critical, theory-based, background which takes account of the wide-ranging research that has been carried out in the field. Following the international research examined in the previous section it would appear that present inclusionary sports programmes are often launched without this kind of framework. This is not a trend that is limited to Finland, but rather one that has also emerged in the international arena. According to Coalter, overambitious project goals and

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unattainable promises of community regeneration should be replaced with achievable targets through which a better structured response to the need for inclusionary sports activities can be achieved.

Elsewhere, Darnell has highlighted how much of the rhetoric found in sports development policy can be said to have foundations in Said-ian notions of Othering. As researchers in the field we must remain critical and be wary of falling in to such traps ourselves. Adopting these broader, theoretical concerns in our approach can help in our analysis of these projects and their objectives.

Closer to home, Nordic report findings have highlighted the role of civic actors in the provision of these services and looked at the social capital that can be produced among volunteers as well as participants. In Denmark, the trend of ‘governing from a distance’ has been identified, with many NGOs and community actors taking on responsibilities that may have earlier been expected to be dealt with by local authorities. These findings have implications for the Finnish situation, where NGOs have long played a role in delivering sport-for-inclusion services. It is anticipated that similar conclusions about the organisational structure behind these activities will be drawn through the analysis process of this study.

4 Source Material and Methodological Problems

A considerable part of the research was taken up investigating the infrastructure and working systems of the Finnish sports sector. This helped to form an overall picture of how programmes apply for funding and who is responsible for sport-for-inclusion projects at the national and local levels. Given that there is no designated responsible person for such policy at the Ministry for Education and Culture, it took some time to map-out the structural framework of the system and identify the key players to speak with. This study will present the reader with an overview of how programmes of this kind are organised, with reference to many of the most influential actors and organisations working in the field in the capital region.

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Interviews were held with NGO representatives and state officials at the national and regional levels. Through the interviewing process it was possible to build a network of useful contacts who helped in the process of piecing together a picture of what is going on in the sector locally, and how the structure behind these services is coordinated. During the interviews questions were explicitly asked about the relationship between the NGOs and state actors, to understand how the two collaborate to provide these programmes. A sample interview guide can be seen in the appendices of this paper. In addition to the interviews, a number of material sources were consulted to formulate an impression of how inclusionary sports programmes are operating in the capital region.

4.1 Governmental and Non-Governmental Materials

Promotional materials from the City of Helsinki’s sports department, and local non-governmental sports organisations, have been analysed in this research project. This material was largely sourced from websites, promotional pamphlets, newsletters and reports. The language used, imagery and presentation in these publications, alongside other features, offer additional material for critique and discussion. These materials play a key role in building an image of sport-for-inclusion projects, how they operate, seek to attract new members and set out their own objectives. The programmes often set out their objectives in these publications, which can be duly criticised by independent researchers.

Furthermore, in the assessment of governmental materials, it was necessary to review the relevant legislation and statute pertaining to sports clubs and inclusionary practices in sport. Much of the existing legislation has been implemented to encourage practices of equality within private sports clubs and local authority initiatives. Furthermore, in the international literature examined in section 3 of this paper, we have identified complimentary notes of approval for Finnish sports laws. Against this backdrop, it is useful to assess the role the law plays in the formulation of sport-for-inclusion programmes. The legislation also has an influence over who is responsible for the delivery of these services, as will be revealed.
4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

It was decided to use a semi-structured interviewing technique which would “unfold in a conversational manner; offering participants the chance to explore the issues they feel are important”. An interview guide was developed and adapted to fit the role of the interviewee and their area of expertise. The interviews were kept as informal as possible and sufficient space was left for the interviewee to speak openly about their involvement with sport-for-inclusion in Helsinki. In this way it was possible to get honest and informative responses for this study.

The guide formed a foundation to which other questions could be added or omitted as necessary; “since semi-structured interviews tend to go their own way, with sidesteps and new questions, it is not possible to prepare all questions in advance”. The interviews were generally held in the office or workplace of the participant, with the idea that when they feel comfortable in their surroundings, they would feel free to speak openly about the topic. These conversations were recorded on a mobile phone and later transcribed for analysis purposes.

Initially, the intention was to speak with solely NGO coordinators but as the research objectives developed, it became necessary to expand the target group to include officials in the Ministry of Education and Culture, the City of Helsinki sports department, and regional administrative services (AVI). Only through speaking with this wider participant group was it possible to formulate an overview of how these programmes are planned and resourced locally. Speaking with only the NGO organisers would have presented a one-sided view of how inclusionary sports programmes are planned and subsidised.

By conducting this qualitative research, it was possible to gain a better understanding of the structural framework behind these kind of activities and the relationship between state and civil actors, including issues related to funding. A total of 12 interviews were conducted. The names of the interviewees and the organisations they work for are included in the table.


below. The table has been divided to show those representatives who work for local NGOs and those involved in local/regional government and sports management.

**Interviewees working for local sport-for-inclusion NGOs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antti Olkinuora</td>
<td>09 Helsinki Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olsi Marko</td>
<td>Yökoris, NMKY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Jallow</td>
<td>Keys to Success, NMKY, 09HHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ville Turkka</td>
<td>Icehearts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jyrki Eräkorpi</td>
<td>NMKY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katja Arpalo</td>
<td>FIMU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interviewees working for local/regional government and administrative services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kristian Åbacka</td>
<td>AVI (regional state administrative services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiina Kivisaari</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Culture Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaela Moua</td>
<td>City of Vantaa, Sportti Kaikille (Sport for all), ETNO and MOK course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saana Saarikivi and Tytti Soini</td>
<td>City of Helsinki, Sports Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Nokkala</td>
<td>City of Helsinki, Sports Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elina Laine</td>
<td>Valo (Finnish Olympic Committee)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the interviewing process it was possible to form networks and gain important contact details which helped in deciphering the various actors and organisations at work in the field. The word ‘inclusion’ sometimes led people to think that this research project was dealing specifically with physically disabled persons and, at times, there was misdirection to the incorrect contact persons. A sample interview guideline is included in the appendices at the end of this paper for further reference.
5 Sport-for-Inclusion in Helsinki

5.1 OKM and Existing Sport Legislation

Within the Finnish system, the body which has responsibility over national sport policy is the Ministry of Education and Culture, also known as OKM (Opetus- ja Kulttuuriministeriö in Finnish language). At the top level, OKM make decisions regarding funding and policy programmes to pursue on a countrywide level. There is little national policy dealing explicitly with a strategy for sport-for-inclusion. Instead, emphasis is placed on encouraging local municipalities to pursue their own programmes with OKM funding. These funding opportunities are open to everyone, although the knowledge of their availability is limited. From the research it appears that there is a much higher concentration of inclusionary sports programmes in the Southern Finland region, surrounding the capital area compared to other regions of the country. The role of OKM and the contents of existing sports legislation will be discussed in this chapter.

One of the first interviewees to be questioned in the research for this study was Tiina Kivisaari, the director at OKM. The purpose of speaking with her was to gain a better perspective on Finnish sport legislation and national strategy. Tiina highlighted the importance of the ‘Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity’ in ensuring that sports clubs and local authorities have inclusive policies. The act requires that sports clubs must fill certain criterion, and adhere to eight principles of equality, when applying for funding from OKM. The act was drawn up in 2015 but did not become binding for all sports clubs until January 2017. Therefore, a reflection on the wording and contents of the act is both timely and relevant for the purpose of this study.

The choice of language within the English translation of the act is demonstrative of the proliferation of sport-for-inclusion strategy in contemporary sport policy. In this piece of legislation, these principles form a decisive factor in the allocation of funding from OKM to private sports clubs and local authorities. Among the eight listed objectives of the act are to promote “the opportunities of various demographic groups to engage in physical activity”, “civic action in the field of physical activity” and, more generally, for “greater equality in
sports and physical activity”. In section 2.2 of the act it states “efforts to achieve these objectives are based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination, social inclusion and multiculturalism”. Through this choice of language, we can see that sports clubs looking for funding must consider the issues of social inclusion and principles of equality in their applications. Section 5 of the Act then goes further in reiterating the previous point that local authorities should be “supporting civic action”.

Under Section 12.3 of the Act, “when assessing eligibility for state aid, due consideration shall be given to the type, extent and social impact of the activities that the organisation is engaged in… and how it promotes equality and non-discrimination”. Therefore, those sport projects which seek to have a large social impact will be given the greatest consideration in regards to their funding applications. This implies that OKM is concerned with the policies of equality coming from private sports clubs, NGOs and local municipalities. This reflects a manner of devolving the responsibilities for inclusionary sports programmes that can be compared to the research emerging from Denmark.

Between officials, the statute was often referred to as the ‘equality act’. It is a measure for ensuring that sports clubs and local authorities consider how they are working to promote equality in their sports activities and programmes. In other words, it puts the onus on them to open up their activities to a wider demographic if they wish to receive funding. While it is encouraging to note that the act is based on principles of social inclusion, private sports clubs play a relatively small role in the delivery of sport-for-inclusion projects in Helsinki. Figures quoted by officials suggested that of the 400 sports clubs in the capital region, only around 50 are involved in coordinating such programmes in collaboration with the City of Helsinki sports department.

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68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
When pressed about her knowledge of local sport-for-inclusion projects, Tiina Kivisaari acknowledged that her understanding of such work was limited:

“We (OKM) are working on the highest level. Of course we do a lot of things with cities but I’m not so involved that I could tell about those. I know they have a lot of those different kinds of projects, and Helsinki is a good example of many things, offering places, offering guidance etc. I’m more at a governmental, state, municipality level”. (Tiina Kivisaari 2017)

This illustrates the lack of knowledge that officials have about what local inclusionary sports programmes are underway and the discord between matters of national and local policy. A key finding from the research is that state-level directors in Finland have a limited understanding of this work. A lack of awareness between officials means that there is little opportunity for a structured national response to the need for these activities. In the same interview Tiina was questioned about who at OKM is responsible for overseeing sport-for-inclusion strategy at a national level:

“We (OKM) don’t have anyone specialized in that specific area. We used to have one. Nowadays we have Toni Piispanen, who is a Para athlete himself. He works on the board of the valtioliikuneuvasto as a civil servant. He takes care of all kinds of equality issues”. (Tiina Kivisaari 2017)

There was clearly some confusion regarding Tiina’s interpretation of sport-for-inclusion work. The Paralympic athlete who Tiina refers to is an Olympic gold medallist dealing with issues regarding equality in sport, with a focus on sports for disabled athletes. At the organisational level it would appear that OKM give a higher priority to disabled peoples sports than other sport-for-inclusion initiatives. However, this is not reflected in the relatively large amounts of funding available for these programmes, with 7 million euros available for subsiding inclusionary sports projects in the year 2017.71

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When we begin to look at the provision of sports-for-inclusion activities in the Helsinki area it is important to make a distinction between the various responsible persons who are coordinating these projects. In broad-speaking terms there are two main responsible groups; the NGOs and the City of Helsinki local authority. From the research gathered it is accurate to say there is little cooperation or knowledge sharing between the two and that co-ordinated activities between the two are limited. This has led to multiple actors attempting to fill this perceived void with their own specially formed programmes. The few examples of collaborative programmes which were uncovered were a multicultural football session in the eastern suburb of Myllypuro, between the City and 09HHR, and women-specific activities run in collaboration with women’s sport NGO Monaliiku. These collaborative efforts reflect that minority groups such as female immigrants and asylum seekers form the target groups of both local authorities and NGOs.

State funding is integral to the NGOs and local authorities involved in delivery sport-for-inclusion programmes. Many of the interviewees questioned in the research for this paper highlighted how, without state funding, they would be unable to continue their operations. Private backers and supporters also play an instrumental role in the funding of sports-based NGO organisations. Antti Olkinuora from 09HHR emphasised how changes in financial backing led to uncertainty in the running of his NGO:

“The main problem, always, is the funding is changing and can change very rapidly. Only a fifth of our budget it permanent. The rest is on a year-to-year basis. That’s absolutely the biggest problem we have”. (Antti Olkinuora 2016)

The funding available for sports-for-inclusion and integration projects is largely distributed by OKM, who receive money from Veikkaus (previously RAY), the organisation for Finnish slot machines and gambling. NGOs and local authorities send their project proposals in accordance with the criteria listed on the relevant OKM website pages. Local authority applications for these funding grants are also dealt with by AVI (Regional State Administrative Agencies) who can approve or decline different sport-for-inclusion projects that will then be forwarded to OKM for a final decision. Kristian Åbacka, sports planning officer at AVI, was interviewed to get a better insight into how funding is allocated in his responsible area, which is the southern region of Finland. Helsinki is situated in this region, therefore Kristian was able
to shed light on the on-going inclusionary sports programmes which have received funding through their applications to AVI.

In the following figure we can see an example of an OKM funding grant for sports projects which have an aim of integration for asylum seekers and immigrants. In the stipulated terms it is stated that projects may run for a period of 1-2 years and that the total money available for distribution is 7 million euros. This funding example shows how the Finnish government is trying to promote integration work through proposals from local authorities, rather than through a formulated national strategy. However, the lack of visibility given to such available funding has led to a situation where few individuals are informed about these opportunities. For example, in an interview with City of Helsinki Sports Department co-ordinators, Tytti Soini and Saana Saarikivi, they were unaware of the new funding grant applications, despite working for the City. Thus, there is a danger that these are not publicised to their full potential.
This overview of the funding process behind these programmes is useful to understand the role OKM play in supporting inclusionary sports programmes in Finland. OKM appears to play more of a supporting role, giving the responsibility of organising these programmes to local authorities and voluntary organisations who may or may not have an interest in pursuing this work. After this summary of the role of the government and funding it is time to turn our attention to local sport-for-inclusion projects in the Helsinki area, firstly looking at those set up by the City of Helsinki’s sports department. Doing so enables us to assess who the key players are in this sphere, identify trends in these programmes and, later, draw comparisons with the international research.
5.2 Sport-for-inclusion Programmes

Through the research into existing inclusionary sports programmes in Finland, one can quickly identify a tendency from local authorities to create women-specific projects. One such example is run by the City of Helsinki titled ‘Naiset yhdessä liikkumaan’. This inclusionary sports programme is targeted at immigrant women, the English translation of the project is ‘Women on the Move Together’. In an interview with the coordinator of the project, Laura Nokkala, the target group for the sports programme were described as women:

“who have been living here (in Helsinki) and women who are at home, they don’t have an education, they don’t know the language, maybe they have been many years taking care of the children and they are unemployed” (Laura Nokkala interview 2017).

The project has been funded through an earlier grant from OKM titled ‘Kehittämisavustus kunnille maahanmuuttajien kotouttamiseen liikunnan avulla’, this translates into English as development for the integration of migrants through sport. The programme is representative of those projects which receive funding support from OKM, with the aim of empowering a group perceived to hold a particularly vulnerable position in Finnish society.

All of the activities in ‘Women on the Move Together’ are delivered in Finnish language with one activity which is designed specifically for language learning through sport. The coaches for these activities are themselves often women of a multicultural background. Laura explained that,

“I guess it’s easier if you are an immigrant woman, it’s easier to come to the class when the teacher is not speaking that well... you can relate to it more” (Laura Nokkala 2017).

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Through using coaches of a similar background to the participants themselves, the project seeks to make the women feel comfortable and encourage their involvement in the programme.

In the interview Laura highlighted that one of the most popular activities being organised as part of the project is a women-only day at the Jakomäki swimming hall. For practical reasons the staff working that day must be all-female and the coordination of this is sufficiently complicated that even arranging this for one day a week is challenging. All of the coordinators interviewed at the City of Helsinki’s sports department were proud of the success the swimming day has become and described the long queues of women who attend the swimming hall every week.

The City of Helsinki’s sports department is not the only organisation which is coordinating sports programmes for migrant women in the capital. Monaliiku is a sports NGO which aims to provide immigrant women with the chance to meet up and practice sport together. In fact, some of the City’s activities are led by Monaliiku instructors where the City offers the practice space and Monaliiku instructors lead the activities. From the research gathered, this was one of the few examples where the City and local NGOs are collaborating together to deliver sport-for-inclusion activities. The author of this study believes that there is too little collaboration between the City of Helsinki and the NGOs. The target groups of these programmes are largely shared, with immigrant women and children the intended participants. Rather than devising separate strategies, a sharing of knowledge between practitioners could lead to a more effective response.

**Why are immigrant women in need of projects like these?**

Laura detailed her perception of the reasons why immigrant women remain a particularly vulnerable group, in need of these activities at accessible locations.

“Now we have groups where women can take their children too. That’s a big problem that they have to look after the children or they don’t have the bus card and they can’t come... There are many reasons... Actually our groups are arranged in places

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that are like closed. You can’t...men are not allowed to come. That’s something that some women are scared that there can be men...” (Laura Nokkala 2017).

Here we can see how the City of Helsinki is trying to resolve the problem of transportation difficulties and familial responsibilities by scheduling activities in areas where the participants have less distance to travel (mainly in Eastern Helsinki) or by arranging programmes in which mothers can take along their children.

Laura was questioned about the reasons for targeting immigrant women and if the project had foundations in research or statistical findings:

“I think why we are focusing on women; it is very based on research. It is proven that immigrant women are less active that Finnish women and also more inactive than immigrant men. That is quite a difficult and very inactive group, that’s why we are focusing on them” (Laura Nokkala 2017)

Immigrant women are perceived to be less active than their Finnish equivalents and when coupled with other difficult circumstances, are prone to experiencing social exclusion. The provision of a space where women can feel safe and included is a big part of the project Laura runs. The challenge of including women and girls in sport-for-inclusion activities was a theme that was raised in all the interviews in the research for this study. Many NGO’s, including Monaliiku and NMKY, have special women-only programmes designed to combat this issue. There is a shared perception that these women form a vulnerable group who remain at risk of social exclusion and that projects should be developed to reverse this trend. The issue is sufficiently serious to merit the full attention of local authorities and NGOs, which reinforces the need for a collaborative response that draws on the strengths of all practitioners working in the area.
5.3 City of Helsinki Sports Strategy

In interviews with other programme coordinators from the City of Helsinki’s sports department, more attention was given to the ability of private sports clubs to encourage participation of children and adults of all backgrounds:

“The most important thing is that our sports clubs open their doors and that they try to get everyone to move. Nowadays it’s a little bit so that they want those children who are talented and they try to coach them to be as good as they can be and then it narrows things... We have about 400 sports clubs in Helsinki which we are supporting, only about 45-50 are interested to do those kind of things with us”. (Tytti Soini 2017)

The City of Helsinki’s sports department has been involved in the country-wide trend of moving away from concentrating on elite sports towards encouraging ‘sports for all’ programmes as one of their priorities. This is not a new development in the Finnish context, as we has noted from the examples we have seen from the international research. The current ‘Nyt’ programme is designed as a low-cost strategy for getting adults in to sports where membership and equipment costs may serve as a barrier. Other focal projects for the department are ‘Easy Sport’ and ‘Fun Action’ which are targeted at children and youth. Most of these activities are held during after school clubs in conjunction with private sports clubs and their instructors. During the interviews with the coordinators from the City’s sports department reference was made to the need for ‘low-threshold’ sports activities and the increased involvement of private sports clubs in delivering these.

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The City has a separate activity programme for the integration of immigrants which includes a variety of supervised sports around the city. Stadin MaaLi is a programme of activities for immigrants and asylum seekers in the Helsinki area. As seen in the figure, the information about this project has been made available in a number of languages, including Somali and Arabic, in an attempt to reach the target audience of the project. As is stated in the brochure, the funding for this programme was approved by the Helsinki City Board with the wider goal of “the good integration of immigrants”. Some of the activities in the programme are pre-existing projects, while others have been added for the purpose of attracting target group participants, mainly asylum-seekers and immigrants. An extensive evaluation of the project has yet to be carried out.

Many local NGOs have devised their own inclusionary sports programmes which operate with little or no collaboration with the local authorities. It is lamentable that these organisations are not joining forces to face the challenge of providing these services together. This study will later argue that adopting such an approach could benefit all parties involved in these programmes. Let us now turn our attention to some of the largest NGOs operating in the sector in the capital region.

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77 Ibid.
5.4 Local NGOs involved in delivery of sport-for-inclusion programmes

The organisations selected for profiling and analysis in this study make up some of the largest sports-based NGOs in the Helsinki capital region. Specifically, these are Icehearts, 09HHR and NMKY. The latter is a collaborator in many initiatives, including the street basketball organisation Yökoris. Each of these have the explicit objective of promoting social inclusion through sport. It is necessary to present an overview of these organisations, the programmes they are involved in, their promotional materials and permeating features of their work. In this section the reader will be introduced to the main NGO-based sports-for-inclusion programmes, and pressing issues surrounding these, within the capital region.

Icehearts

The organisation Icehearts is highly suitable for profiling in this study as it is one of the biggest sports-based NGOs in Finland and receives the majority of its funding from the Ministry of Health and Social Services. Currently, the organisation has over 27 teams in 10 cities in Finland, which reach around 500 children annually. The founder of the NGO, Ville Turkka said the organisation received over 600,000 euros from Veikkaus (the recently reformed Finnish gaming/gambling organisation) last year. Icehearts focuses on using sport, namely ice-hockey, to improve educational and life prospects for troublesome young boys. The strategy involves forming a team of 6 year-old children who will be Icehearts ice-hockey team members for 12 years, until they turn 18. Icehearts ‘educators’, or ‘mentors’, provide support to teachers and children throughout the school day, alongside leading the sports clubs.

Today the organisation is active in almost all large metropolitan areas of Finland and new projects using football, Finnish baseball and floorball are also underway. The club prides itself on being able to form meaningful and trusting relationships between educators and participants. Icehearts may be better described as a sports intervention initiative, as it tries to reverse negative behavioural patterns in children through sport and supervision rather than having a goal of social inclusion for minority groups. Icehearts aims to support children from single-parent families who may suffer from trust issues when dealing with adults and social situations more generally. These themes were reiterated in the interview with the founder of the organisation, Ville Turkka.
Icehearts promotional material features a wealth of quotes about the strengths and ambitions of the project, with a heavy focus on troublesome boys. Quotes such as “we intervene and we are not absent” and “social exclusion is a lack of continuous support” are featured throughout the publication. The choice of language used emphasises Ville’s ambition to lessen the cost to the state of providing extended social care to challenging children from difficult family backgrounds. Icehearts claims not only to be helping the participants but also the state, tax payer’s money and the social services department. In the promotional material claims are also made about how the programme will tackle the problems of substance and alcohol abuse common among young team members.

**Icehearts Mentors**

Icehearts mentors are typically adult males to whom the participants (boys) can look up to for support. Local education departments themselves pay for the mentors to work in their respective regions. They help school teachers by providing extra-support in and out of the classroom.

“For children, the mentor offers a same-sex role model. The majority of children selected for the team come from families with little or no presence of a male adult. Male children of single parents can find it difficult to grow into balanced young men. In many cases, the child may not come into contact with men in professional roles until he starts secondary school. In the Icehearts model, children have virtually daily contact with a male mentor”.

The Icehearts model even goes as far as to the profile of a participant for their programme as follows;

“A typical Icehearts child is a boy from an immigrant, single parent or large family, and whose resources for providing leisure activities is limited”

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78 Icehearts Ry: Promotional Booklet, Helsinki (2010)
80 Icehearts Ry: Promotional Booklet, Helsinki (2010)
Profiling the intended participant of the sports club in this manner shows how Icehearts intends to perform a social function and reflects Ville Turkka’s background as a social worker in Helsinki. Through such language we can see how the organisation is seeking to include minority groups. However, we can also be critical of the manners in which the programme is operating. In particular it’s apparent focus on boys.

**Gender Issues**

When examining the website and promotional materials of Icehearts one is immediately struck by images of boys and men taking part in sports and outdoor activities, there are very few references made to girls taking part in their activities. Ville made mention of the fact that the organisation was set up with the intent of helping so-termed ‘troublesome boys’ and that girls are not at the core of the Icehearts manifesto.

In the promotional material, we are presented with pictures of bearded and strong-looking men who work as ‘educators’ to the young boys. In the interview with Ville Turkka he humorously boasted about the number of sporting injuries, such as stitches to his face, from which he had suffered through his years playing sport. His experience of violence in sport had made him fearless, he said, and, as such, the prospect of dealing with disruptive young boys was not daunting. This image of strong, male, ex- professional athletes was noted as a permeating feature of Icehearts promotional materials. Such imagery presents a narrative in which these activities are for a certain type of tough, young boy, and may not be as inclusive as they are intended to be. This stands in contrast to other sports-for-inclusion programmes examined in this research. It is crucial to adopt a critical stance when analysing such work as an independent researcher and it is hoped that future academics can continue this tradition.
In recent years Icehearts has established a girls’ team, after a female sports instructor joined the organisation. While this is a positive development, there is still a large imbalance between the number of boy’s teams and that of girls. Currently there are 27 boys’ teams around the country, compared to just one girls. Another point to note from the interview with Ville is his perception that difficult boys were somewhat costlier to the state and social services than their female counterparts. This formed part of his rationale for prioritising boys in the target group.

The research study which is referenced by Icehearts is known as the ‘Finnish Boy to a Man’ study in which correlations are identified between early-age bullying and criminality patterns in adult life. We may be critical of the selective approach in which the organisation has collected its background information, with little reference made to international studies, or those that include females. Furthermore, an in-depth study on the outcomes for those participants who have completed the programme is missing from the research. To date just two teams have completed the full 12-year training programme within the team framework.

Icehearts Research and FIMU

There have been various Bachelor level studies on the work of Icehearts. Many of these studies focus on the psychological aspect of the work the organisation carries out and the role the mentors play. Students from disciplines such as behavioural sciences have examined the methods through which the NGO attempts to combat anti-social behaviour. The majority of these studies lack a critical discussion of Icehearts’ work, instead they offer guidelines on working practices for the organisation. Further critical studies of Icehearts’ work would be a welcome development.

Ville Turkka was also highly critical of FIMU (the Finnish Multicultural Sports Federation), an umbrella organisation designed to improve the position of immigrants in Finnish sports. FIMU

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aims to use an expansive network of sports clubs to promote the interests of minority groups in the country and “safeguard the interests of immigrant associations”. However, Ville scrutinised the organisation for a lack of action in the field:

“I used to sit on the board of FIMU for two years but then I left because they didn’t do anything, only planning”. (Ville Turkka 2017)

In an interview conducted as part of this research project, the secretary of FIMU, Katja Arpalo, it was unclear what work the organisation was doing. Some international campaigns, such as the international soccer initiative ‘Show the Red Card to Racism’, are being promoted locally through FIMU. Given the large-scale goals of the lobbying organisation, promoting the position immigrants in Finnish sport, it is difficult to see the areas in which FIMU has been active, despite the high number of partner teams they work with. It is disheartening to learn that FIMU is perceived as doing little to meet its goals of improving the situation for immigrants in Finnish sport. More work needs to be done by other NGOs and the local authorities to ensure that these issues continue to be pushed forward in the arena of sports and wider society.

09HHR

09 Helsinki Human Rights is a local NGO organisation which aims to promote ‘social equality through sport’. 09HHR’s activities are organised in areas with socio-economic problems and in those places with high numbers of so-called ‘second generation’ immigrant families (in Finnish language). The children growing up in these areas face a number of challenges in their everyday lives and 09HHR aims to provide a constructive outlet for their energy while building positive relationships and group cohesion between young people of all backgrounds. The majority of 09HHR’s activities take place in Eastern Helsinki and Vantaa. As previously mentioned, these are the areas of the city which have been identified as having highest concentration of immigrant families. 09HHR deals primarily with inclusionary sports

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activities for children but also organises a multicultural coach education programme which will be profiled in the following section.

**NMKY/Yökoris**

Yökoris translates in to English as ‘night basketball’ and it is a project run in collaboration with NMKY (Finnish YMCA) which aims to engage young people and adults through street basketball. In the summer, representatives visit different locations around the city to hold informal games, jam sessions and tournaments, usually during the evening. During the winter months events are held at indoor games halls. The director of Yökoris, Olsi Marko, detailed how the organisation has grown over the past years:

“I've been working with Yökoris for the last 6 years and the project has grown a lot. When I started Yökoris we had 2,000 participants a year now we have more than 20,000”. (Olsi Marko 2016)

In the interviews with coordinators from NMKY, they detailed a new sports and vocational programme, called Työpäjä, which shares a number of similarities with the aforementioned SSP project in Rotterdam covered in section 3.1 of this paper. In a similar manner to the Dutch programme, they seek to give work experience to young people in Helsinki who may be at risk of social exclusion. After a series of weekly training sessions, the selected participants are then given the chance to work in the field, usually in other local, sports-focused NGOs. Jyrki Eräkörpi, who is the Director of Social Work at NMKY, described the target group which the Työpäjä project aims to reach as follows:

“Of course they (participants) could go to the TE (unemployment) office for help but for whatever reason they don’t go. The main issue is that we reach those people who don’t trust the authorities anymore for whatever reason. Basically the project is meant for 25-35 year old males”. (Jyrki Eräkörpi 2017)

The development of the Työpäjä programme demonstrates how local organisations are taking influence from international trends in the area and adapting these to fit the Helsinki social

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landscape. In this case, the project has been created and implemented by NMKY and not the local authority, as it was in the Dutch example, so should not be described as a method of establishing social control. However, we may be critical that the project has a male focus as there are also young females in the same position who would benefit from such an opportunity.

“We show them what it’s like to work as a sport instructor at an NGO. Or if they want to work in after-school clubs, we let them have that chance. We have group meetings that have targets to give more opportunities for them to develop their work or write CVs etc. it’s the only workshop of this kind that’s arranged like this”. (Jyrki Eräkörpi 2017)

**Keys for Success (K2S) (Menestyksen Avaimet)**

The K2S project, which is coordinated through collaboration with NMKY, is designed to improve social and physical aspects of life for young people the provision of a training programme for private sports clubs. The sports clubs request a K2S training workshop which consists of discussions and sports activities with the young team members and the adult coaches.

On the K2S website the stated aims of the project are:

“to develop a model to use in already existing teams/ groups that supports and promotes their holistic development through four main pillars: Healthy lifestyles, Social skills, Education & time management, Mental wellbeing”.

The leader of the project is Pierre Jallow, who has been involved in multiple roles in sport-for-inclusion activities. It is worthwhile noting that many of the key figures involved in local sport-for-inclusion NGOs are themselves ex-professional sports players, with many coming from a multicultural background. A large number of these may not speak Finnish to a fluent level. This is further justification for the publication of more research in the field in English.

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Pierre spoke about the difficulties of attracting sports clubs to his project, with low budgets and resources, many were simply not in a position to get involved with the K2S project.

“It’s easy to run projects when you have a three to five year funding...but sustainability has been an issue. The parents always complain about club fees being expensive. But clubs always complain about not having enough resources so they’re definitely not going to put their money in to that (our project). So you end up in an impasse where no one wants to pay unless they have funding to continue that” (Pierre Jallow 2016)

Programmes such as K2S illustrate how NGOs are also trying to engage with private sports clubs to encourage good practices and healthy group cohesion. In the research this was the only programme of this nature identified, with the majority of the NGOs carrying out their activities independent of private sport club support. Pierre is also involved in delivering the multicultural coach education programme through 09HHR, as detailed in the following section. His agency between these NGOs reflects a sharing of expertise between these tight-knit local sports organisations.

5.5 Educating Coaches

09HHR organises the MOK course (Monikulttuurinen Ohjaus), multicultural coach education, behind which:

“the idea is to train counsellors so that they learn cross-cultural communication and what they should take in to consideration when leading these multi-cultural groups“.

(Antti Olkinuora 2016)

To date, members of private sports clubs and local authority sports coordinators have attended the course on a voluntary basis. The possible implications of obligatory training sessions of this nature will be discussed in the discussion section of this paper. The course is

operated through 09HHR and uses local experts in the field, Pierre Jallow and Michaela Moua to deliver the training programme. Pierre stated that in setting up the course:

“the idea is that we (people) very often say that sport is the biggest integrator, that you can bring kids from anywhere in the world and just throw a ball in the middle, let them play and everything will be fine. But we also know that sport is a place for racism, discrimination and can have a negative impact as well. So what happens to a kid who comes in to a specific sports group thinking, ‘oh my god, finally I feel like I’m accepted’ but then end up feeling like they are being discriminated against? Even if the coach or instructor did not mean to do that”. (Pierre Jallow 2016)

Accepting that these activities can have negative consequences for its participants shows that Pierre is ready to take a critical look at how we manage this work and is trying to steer leaders toward best practices. Pierre is himself an ex-professional sports player as many of the organisers of inclusionary sports activities in Helsinki are. This is reflected in how the course is delivered in English because many of these trainers do not have fluent level Finnish language skills. He went on to explain why the course is targeted at coaches:

“The role of the leader is important everywhere but especially in sport. They get to influence in which direction the group goes towards. So if you’re using sport as a tool to integrate young people, it needs to start from the leader. If you already have
differences within the group, and that group is not managed properly, these can easily escalate. This can make the kids or young people even worse than they may have been otherwise. The group can instil negative values in participants, such as “nobody cares about me, even in sport”. (Pierre Jallow 2016)

Antti Olkinuora from 09HHR also highlighted the importance of training coaches in this work as a preliminary step before they can have a positive impact on the child participants which his organisation typically work with:

“First we have an impact on adults and when adults understand their role better then later the kids will get the benefit. We are talking about zero tolerance to bullying and racism in the course”. (Antti Olkinuora 2016)

In this example training programme we can see collaboration between the various local NGOs who take part in sport-for-inclusion work, in the sense that they are sending coaches and educators to take part in the workshop. It is a positive development to see that NGOs are joining forces to deliver this training programme. Yökoris uses this same coach education programme for its workers, as do other sports NGOs and private sports clubs. The training programme is one example of the civic action which these local organisations are performing. In doing so, they are taking responsibility for an area where the expectation may have been for governmental bodies to provide this support. Governmental and local authority sport coordinators should be aware of such programmes and use them to their full potential. Correlations can be drawn to the ‘governing from a distance’ highlighted in the Danish research, where voluntary organisations were noted as playing an instrumental role in the delivery of inclusionary sports programmes.

The Role of Coaches

Olsi Marko from street basketball organisation Yökoris spoke about how his workers attempt to engage with participants at an equal level.

“The workers take part in the games so you don’t even recognize who the workers are. They are trained to see everyone as equals. This is what makes it pleasant to come along, because everyone feels that they belong here”. (Olsi Marko 2016)
In this way coaches are participants, indistinguishable from the rest of the group, and equal. Many of these organisations try to use workers from ethnic-minority backgrounds who have strong knowledge of the area in which they are working.

“We try to get, as much as possible, multicultural background workers so that every youth, every guy or girl, who comes to join our activities can find themselves in the game”. (Olsi Marko 2016)

There was a consensus between the NGO sports coordinators interviewed that employing young workers of a multicultural background made it easier to relate to and reach the target group clients. The target group for 09HHR, Yökoris and NMKY are largely young people and such a strategy appears to be working, with a large number of multicultural children taking part in their activities.

**New Developments in Helsinki**

Yökoris and NMKY have established a new basketball team which aims to give young participants the chance to take part in the team while keeping costs to participants, the local authority and NGOs to a minimum. The Yökoris Knights basketball team uses unreserved sports hall times to avoid paying reservation fees for their training. The coaches are informed of available training space at the last minute and this information is then shared through social media and messaging apps to participants. It is an innovative way of avoiding the expenses that most sports teams encounter and the participants don’t need to pay the high membership fees usually imposed. This example is an important development in the Helsinki landscape as it demonstrates how NGOs and local authorities can work together to provide low-cost inclusionary sports activities.

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5.6 Asylum seekers and Inclusion Work

09HHR and NMKY have both been involved in the provision of sports activities for asylum seekers in recent years. The activities were initially set-up in 2015 when an unprecedented number of asylum seekers arrived in Finland, with the majority placed in reception centres in the capital region.\(^8^9\) A demand for sports programmes for these marginalised groups was identified by local NGOs who decided to take action. In the interviews Antti, Olsi and Jyrki were questioned about their motivation for carrying out this kind of work, applying for funding and the practicalities of arranging these activities. Antti explained how they took the decision to start the programme in 2015,

“We (09HHR) are using physical education, with different games, as a tool for integration. We understood directly that the things we are doing can help the refugees to have some kind of bearing on their everyday lives. Even if we just have one sporting club per week, it’s something that they can wait for and look forward to”. (Antti Olkinuora 2016)

Olsi at NMKY/Yökoris highlighted the importance of the place where these activities are held and how in working with asylum seekers he is trying to include locals as well. He stated,

“We don’t want to isolate them to be the refugees also when they do sports. They already live in this building (reception centres) so we would like them to move from their own place where they are and come to the activities where everyone else is...It doesn’t mean that their life is much better but it means that at least they have to be in touch with people who live in Helsinki. Maybe they find a friend, maybe they find a solution, and maybe they find motivation to wait for their answers (from Migri for their asylum claims)”. (Olsi Marko 2016)

In this quote we are shown the importance given to the space where these activities take place and the idea that these sports activities are offering a welcome escape from the everyday realities of beaurocracy and stresses that asylum-seekers face in Helsinki. Olsi

believes that those activities with both locals and asylum seekers are most valuable to the inclusion process. This view was reiterated in other NGO organiser interviews and in the literature from other Nordic countries.

**Anti-racism work in the field**

Michaela Moua is a former professional basketball player for the Finnish national team and now coordinates inclusionary sports activities in the Vantaa area, just north from Helsinki. She has much experience in the field locally and sits on the ETNO board for ethnic relations in sport which is supported by the Ministry of Justice. In her interview she discussed the motivation behind her involvement in this work:

> “I’ve experienced a lot of things myself, it was very traumatic. I think my inner-activist really awakened when I had my daughter. I kind of refused to just sit still and not do anything about it. If I can do just one thing that would make it easier for her. I don’t want her to face the things that I did, at least I want to do something that will help”. (Michaela Moua, 2017)

Michaela went on to give some detailed suggestions of how the current system could be improved. She made the claim that actors in the field need to be working closer together and that there should be further training for those providing these services, particularly from local authorities:

> “I think there should be more coordination amongst the people that are doing this work as there are not many of us. I think there should be training for people who do this work. I already said this to somebody in the Ministry... In order to receive the funding, you should have to take some sort of cultural sensitivity training. It could be offered by a number of people who are currently doing it. Heck, even I could do it. I’m training people in multicultural work... There are trainers out there” (Michaela Moua 2017)

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Michaela offered her views on sport-for-inclusion in the Finnish context and the problems that are beginning to be faced, such as rising a population of asylum seekers and their relocation to more remote areas of the country.

“Finland is a very homogenous country you know so this is a very new situation for a lot of people. It’s different for us here in Vantaa, it’s a bigger city which is close to Helsinki. What if you go somewhere up north where they are starting a project like this? Many now have a refugee reception centre nearby. They don’t know what to do? They say ‘I think they would like to do such and such a sport’ without even asking them. It’s a very like, infantile relationship. People don’t really recognize their prejudices because they haven’t ever dealt with people from different cultures. (Michaela Moua 2017)

Michaela’s concerns about how these activities are coordinated provide a worrying insight into how these activities are being arranged in more remote areas of Finland, far from the multicultural capital region. She highlights how a lack of expertise and limited sharing of knowledge between experts in the field is having an adverse effect on the delivery of these services. Following these comments, there is a demand for exploring the impact of sport-for-inclusion programmes in more rural areas of Finland where new initiatives are emerging.
6 A Field of Tension and Confusion

In the following discussion section we will see reflection on the findings and themes which have emerged from the interviews, promotional materials and background research in to sport-for-inclusion programmes in Helsinki. Correlations can be made between international research and the current situation locally, as will be shown. Theoretical issues from the literature have also been extracted from comments made in the interviewing process, for example in the rhetoric used by programme organisers.

6.1 Saidian ‘Othering’ in the Finnish Context

During the interviews with officials from the City of Helsinki sports department there were several instances where the coordinators used the word ‘they’ to refer to multicultural sports participants. In a similar manner to what Darnell termed as Saidian othering in his criticism of sports development rhetoric, Tytti Soini suggested that when arranging activities for a target group of multicultural boys,

“...it looks like if we have boys from a multicultural background they like to play football” (Tytti Soini, 2017)

As a researcher one must take her generalising comments in a critical light in order to uphold ethical and independent practices. What may appear as a small passing comment can, in actual fact, have a large influence on forming discourse surrounding the development of sports-for-inclusion policies. We should ask ourselves if the same the activity preference would not be the same for all groups of young males. The choice of language suggests an oversimplifying narrative of the participants in these activities, like that which Darnell has exposed in the literature. By grouping together all boys of a multicultural background under the heading of ‘they’, Tytti is effectively distancing or differentiating these participants from other children participants. This is counterproductive to the goals of the City of Helsinki’s sport for all programmes. A continuing reliance on vocabulary that is divisive rather than inclusive poses a real threat to the overall goal of inclusion behind this work.

Michaela Moua’s comments on how these activities are arranged in rural areas also leads to the conclusion that the discourse among local authority organisers can be described as
problematic. She explained that decisions regarding activities are often made without any consideration given to the requests of asylum seeker participants. An acceptance that these inefficient practices are taking place is the first step toward rectifying the situation.

6.2 Ambiguity: From Legislation to Management

In the background research it was noted how existing Finnish sports law advocates inclusionary practices on the part of private sports clubs and local authorities. This is most explicitly seen in the Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity. The act encourages organisations to adhere to principles of equality when applying for funding from OKM. However, it was also easy to identify the lack of a national strategy in the area of sport-for-inclusion at the ministerial level. The author of this paper believes that this policy vacuum needs to be addressed to formulate a more effective strategy for sport-for-inclusion across the capital region and the whole of Finland.

The director of the OKM department, Tiina Kivisaari, knew little about sport-for-inclusion initiatives at a local-level or otherwise, despite the considerable amounts of funding going out to local municipality projects and NGOs. It is understood that OKM wishes to devolve the responsibility for such programmes to local authorities, with city’s realising their own programmes and appointing staff deliver these. However, the lack of a countrywide strategy or strict regulations for the implementation of these programmes has led to an imbalance. For example, some municipalities are much better equipped to deal with these questions than others. If sport-for-inclusion policy is deemed as important as to include it in the statute, why is there no responsible person within the highest governing body for sport, OKM, to see that a strategy is followed through?

This ambiguity or disparity is illustrative of what Fred Coalter described as “inflated promises in marginal policy areas”.

There has been international recognition of Finnish legislature in the area of sports equality, even before the most recent updates. Such praise seems to be a rather one-dimensional interpretation of the Finnish situation, as international research made little mention of local sport-for-inclusion programmes. While the well-intentioned phrasing of Finnish sports legislation is commendable, a more critical study of Finnish sports policy and practices is needed to fully understand the situation within a wider sport-for-inclusion context.

6.3 Nordic Civic Action and Governing from a Distance

The motivation behind local NGO based sport-for-inclusion work can be compared to the civic-responsibility Agergaard discusses in her Danish research. Many of the organisers highlighted how they were trying to fill a gap in service provision by delivering sports activities for minority or socially disadvantaged groups who were currently not being reached by wider sport initiatives. This is most clearly seen in the asylum-seeker activities that have been arranged between 09HHR, NMKY and Yökoris.

Comments from the coordinators, Antti and Olsi at 09HHR and Yökoris, reflect the objectives and ambitions they have for these programmes. Both highlighted the importance of creating a place where locals and asylum seekers can take part in sport together. Olsi acknowledged that a two-way integration process worked best, giving newcomers to Finland the chance to interact with locals or those who have been living here for a longer time. Activities and programmes which aim to bring these different groups together are attempting to promote group cohesion and avoid the kind of inter-group problems that occur and have been documented in research by Engh et al. in Nordic sports events.

The established-outsider model is just one of the theoretical approaches which has drawn attention to the fact that, when badly managed, these activities can contribute to the further exclusion of minority groups. In the coordinator interviews, particularly with the NGOs, there seemed to be an acceptance that negative outcomes remained an unwanted possibility and could not be completely ignored or discounted. Measures, like using young trainers from multicultural backgrounds, are being used in both local authority and NGO programmes to help reach and include their respective participant target groups. However, the findings from
the literature in section 3 of this paper revealed that the possibility for further exclusion or negative outcomes from these activities cannot be completely eradicated.

The interview with Pierre Jallow gave further evidence that local organisers are aware of the difficulties in the successful management of multicultural groups and emphasised how local sports coaches would benefit from intercultural training sessions. This was also backed up in the statements made by Michaela Moua, who is also involved in delivering the multicultural coach (MOK) education through 09HHR. Following the comments made in these interviews, only when sports coaches are properly trained can multicultural group dynamics be fostered in a healthy and productive manner.

The NGOs which have been researched and interviewed in Helsinki can also be said to be driven by a sense of civic responsibility, with the objective of filling a perceived gap in service provision (sport for immigrants, disadvantaged youth and women-specific activities) that the local authority is not delivering on. Comparisons can be made with Agergaard’s research in to the work of Danish NGOs and other Nordic studies such as Seippel’s examination of the role of voluntary organisations in the delivery of sport-for-inclusion programmes. Furthermore, as we have seen, the legislation and stance of the OKM hints at the process of ‘governing from a distance’ which Agergaard and her colleagues identify in the Danish social landscape. Drawing such links illustrates that there is place in the research for further comparative studies between Nordic countries and Finland. Noting this pattern of governing from a distance is not to claim that this is a positive or negative development. The main point here is that, as critical researchers, we acknowledge the manner in which the current framework for these activities is set-up.

6.4 A Call for Improvements

Through all of the interviews which were held in the investigation for this research project there was a consensus that steps should be taken to improve the existing structure of sport-for-inclusion services in Helsinki. Several of the main suggestions are included here to illustrate the different ways in which these services could be improved. Here it is crucial to remember that these comments are coming from organisers and coordinators operating in
the sport-for-inclusion field, mostly on behalf of local NGOs. Therefore the suggestions come from an experienced and knowledgeable standing point.

Michaela Moua made the claim that there are no checks and balances in place to ensure that the allocation of OKM funding is properly managed.

“I think that in order for the ministry (OKM) to get the most ‘bang for their buck’ they should require somebody in every project to go through a cultural sensitivity training. It would save a lot of projects from trial and error”. (Michaela Moua 2017).

The interviews conducted in the process of this project has led this author to conclude that there is a highly skilled, and committed, set of sport-for-inclusion professionals in Helsinki. These professionals have much expertise in the field and it is believed that higher-level ministry officials could do more to use this knowledge base to the advantage of everyone. Michaela’s suggestion of a cultural sensitivity training programme is an entirely viable measure. This would ensure that the organisers of inclusionary sports activities are educated in matters pertaining to multicultural group management. She goes on to say that she herself could be one of the trainers for such a project, given her experience teaching the MOK course with 09HHR. Michaela notes how it could act as an insurance measure to ensure that these activities were not run by under experienced trainers.

Other interviewees drew attention to the fact that the available funding for inclusionary sports programmes is often only available on a short-term basis, which makes longer plan activities difficult.

“What needs to be improved is the sustainability. I’ve seen many projects that have been pretty successful but then once their time is up there is no continuation”. (Pierre Jallow 2016)

A key recommendation from the interviewees is that funding opportunities for a longer period would offer greater sustainability and allow projects to make a more meaningful impact. In this way OKM could help NGOs to form longer-term plans and ensure that these programmes can continue the work started.
From an administrational point of view, Kristian at AVI suggested that further evaluative procedures for the local authority project applications he receives would be one way in which to improve the current set-up.

“Some kind of evaluation that is more than just a report. These indicators, the goals which the project wants to reach. In the current situation we don’t have so much evaluative research with indicators, what’s the goals...” (Kristian Åbacka 2017)
**Women-Specific Sports Programmes**

The number of women-specific sports programmes in Helsinki highlights the fact that women and particularly migrant women remain a vulnerable group in Finnish society. Work is being done to try and combat the social exclusion of immigrant mothers and newcomers to Helsinki. The example of the City of Helsinki’s ‘Women on the Move Together’ programme is testament to this perception.

There is still much work to be done to open up other existing sport-for-inclusion programmes to girls and women participants. We saw in the example of Icehearts’ strategy and promotional material how their activities are targeted at boys with a strong focus on supporting boys with behavioural issues. Moreover, in previous studies on these organisation there has been little criticism of policies which are in danger of excluding females. One recommendation from the author of this paper is that specific funding be awarded to organisations who are willing to support and encourage greater female participation through their inclusionary sports programmes.

Further critical research on local sport-for-inclusion programmes is needed to expose problematic issues of gender and other issues which are missing or have been overlooked in the existing Finnish discourse. Future studies would benefit from taking a more critical approach to these programmes, instead of playing to the needs of the organisation in question. Previous research, such as the thesis by Grochowski has paid special attention to migrant women and the role of sports programmes in the integration process. This author believes that such independent studies should form the basis of future sport-for-inclusion programmes and policies.

**Additional Themes for Future and Further Consultation**

The interviews held in the research for this study were deeply informative experiences that raised a variety of wide-ranging issues beyond the immediate scope and scale of the research paper presented here. These issues are summarised below for further consideration. It is important to note that with more data, the researcher would be able to explore and expand on these in greater detail. These could form the basis of a doctoral study, as will be detailed in the following section.
Kristian at AVI stated in his interview that the most popular sport-for-inclusion project proposals coming from local authorities were after-school clubs for children and women-specific sports programmes. This exemplifies how local authorities perceive these groups to be the most vulnerable in Finnish society and thus, most in need of such programmes. From the research it also suggests that NGOs and local authorities have differing views on who are in the most need of such programmes. For example, the asylum-seeker targeted activities examined in this study were established by local NGOs who deemed this group to be neglected in local authority programmes.

From the interviews there was a recommendation that NGOs and local authorities should be collaborating together more in both planning and delivering these services. This author is in agreement with these suggestions. While we have seen good work in the local context, it would be promising to see more examples where the two are cooperating together instead of devising separate programmes, which often share the same goals and objectives.

Sport-for-inclusion programmes designed for asylum seekers were thought to work best when they also involved local residents. There was an acceptance that a two-way process which would bring locals and newcomers to the city together was the most constructive way to arrange these activities. This author has been participating in an informal volleyball programme for asylum seekers, which makes use of this dynamic, throughout the spring of 2017. Through observation and active participation, it is true to say that these offer an effective manner for including participants of all backgrounds.

Each of these themes merit further investigation in a more-detailed analysis of sport-for-inclusion programmes in Helsinki. This study has presented an overview of some of the most pressing issues which were highlighted through the interviewing process by those organisers involved in the delivery of these activities.
7 Final Discussion

It is anticipated that this study can add to the debate surrounding sport-for-inclusion practices within Helsinki and around Finland. In the introduction to this paper it was outlined that critical research is greatly lacking from the Finnish discourse on this theme. This paper was developed to address this gap in the literature. Here, in this final discussion, we will see a review of the main themes which have emerged from this investigation and put forward recommendations for how further research projects may be structured.

International case studies from the sport-for-inclusion literature have drawn on Bourdieu’s theory of social capital, with some critical theorists like Spaaij calling in to question the potential benefits that can be drawn from such work. Elsewhere, Fred Coalter has been highly critical of the international importance given to inclusionary sports policy, which is often formulated without a theory-based framework. An overview of the international research was imperative to form a starting point from which to introduce this study.

In the Nordic sphere, increased attention has been paid to the role which voluntary organisations play in the delivery of these services. The phenomenon of ‘governing from a distance’ was identified in the Danish social landscape. Through a close reading of the relevant Finnish legislation and the structuring of sport-for-inclusion programmes, this same trend was identifiable in the Helsinki sport-for-inclusion context. It was revealed how the OKM Ministry attempt to devolve the responsibility for delivering these services to NGOs, local authorities and private sports clubs. These actors, specifically the first two, formed the drivers of these activities, rather than a national strategy coordinated at the governmental level. Such findings emphasise the correlations that can be drawn between the Nordic countries, and their shared experience of inclusionary sports programmes.

Another example of the civic responsibility which Helsinki sports NGOs are accepting is the MOK, multicultural coach education programme, run by 09HHR. This is training sports coaches in diversity issues, knowledge which they later put in to action. The same NGOs involved have also been organising sports programmes for asylum seekers in recent years. Like in the Nordic literature examined, these organisers explained how they were moved to
conduct such work through a sense of civic duty. It has been illustrated that these NGO actors play a vital role in the delivery of sport-for-inclusion programmes in the capital region.

In the example sports programmes, we also saw that a project designed to get disadvantaged youth in to work through sport is being piloted in Helsinki. The Työpaja programme by NMKY was identified to have many parallels with a Dutch project studied in the literature. Again, these examples illustrate how the Helsinki sport-for-inclusion sector is coming to reflect these international trends.

Through a close reading of the promotional materials of local sports NGO Icehearts, it was discovered that these programmes may not be as all-inclusive as they market themselves to be. The problem in this instance was the perceived lack of possibility for girls to participate in this particular programme. The challenge of including females in sport-for-inclusion activities was one of the main themes which emerged from the interviews undertaken in the research for this paper. Women-specific inclusionary sports programmes were found to be gaining popularity in the Helsinki region. From the interviews and analysis of the existing materials, it could be seen that immigrant women were perceived as forming a particularly vulnerable group in Finnish society. Measures, such as using female coaches with multicultural backgrounds, were being employed by NGOs and local authorities to encourage female participation in these sporting activities and provide a space where these women can

The hypothesis of this paper, that there is a field of tension between policymakers and practitioners, has been proven through this investigation. This was one of the main findings to come from the interviews with Helsinki organisers of inclusionary sports activities. The interviewees were questioned about possible improvements that could be made to the existing sport-for-inclusion infrastructure in Finland. Among these suggestions were obligatory cultural sensitivity training sessions for practitioners and wider discussion with the participant base of these programmes. Further details of these recommendations are detailed in the previous section of this paper. These views from key actors in the field provide substantial evidence that measures should be taken to improve the infrastructure and delivery of these programmes, with a greater collaboration between governmental bodies and NGOs.
**Further Research**

There is suitable ground for a doctoral study into the practices of the various sport-for-inclusion projects that are currently operating in the Helsinki area. There have been talks with professors in the faculty of Humanities at the University of Helsinki about a possible candidature for conducting a deeper research project of this kind. The additional themes for further consideration outlined in section 6 of this paper reinforce the value of further investigation undertaken in this area, and the scope offered to tackle wider-ranging issues in an extended study.

Examples of further studies could take inspiration from recent trends identified in the international literature by evaluating the role of inclusionary sports programmes in the integration process of asylum seekers, or their capacity for producing social capital. Other conceivable research projects could focus on the individual themes which have emerged from this study, such as the challenge of including girls in sport-for-inclusion projects or the civic role of NGOs who operate in this area.

Another study missing from the current Finnish discourse is an evaluation of the MOK, multicultural coach education programme, and how coaches put the theory gained from the course in to practice when returning to their own sports clubs and organisations. A comparative study between a sports club where the coach has received this training and another which has not could serve as an evaluation of the training programme and to what extent it achieves its objectives. From the research it was discovered that the training course is one of the few educational programmes in Finland which attempts to address the growing multicultural dynamics of sports clubs and their management.

**Final Remarks**

State funding is available to those NGOs and local authorities who seek to carry out sport-for-inclusion work in Finland, however there are few checks in place to make sure that best practices are upheld when delivering these programmes. While the existing legislation has been formulated to ensure that principles of equality are promoted, the law alone cannot guarantee the high level of services needed to perform the difficult task of including minority groups in society through sport. A review of the funding process and consideration of the
improvements outlined in section 6 of this paper could be hugely constructive to refining the existing system.

Through the process of conducting this research project in the Helsinki capital region it has been possible to identify a highly skilled group of professionals involved in the delivery of inclusionary sports services. This expertise should be recognised and used to its full potential within system. A further sharing of knowledge between all practitioners in the field would be beneficial the overall delivery of these services. The current set-up of sport-for-inclusion programmes, between NGOs and local authorities, can be described as fragmented and in need of further review. As citizens with an interest in the promotion of social cohesion, we should strive for the best outcomes for participants through an effectively planned strategy. Further critical research in the field would greatly contribute to its sustainable development, as it has added to the debate in other Nordic countries.

In the Finnish literature there has been speculation over how many asylum seekers and immigrants will arrive in Finland in the coming years. The statistics we have seen have illustrated how the number of Helsinki inhabitants of a multicultural background is all the time increasing. Anti-racism and pro-diversity campaigns have been developed to promote social cohesion and reduce hostility to newcomer groups. The inclusionary sports programmes presented in this study form a key part of this strategy. Against this backdrop, it should be accepted that sport-for-inclusion programmes need to be given the due evaluation, and critical study, that they merit. Through further scholarly investigation in the field, the local inclusionary sports sector can adapt and evolve to better meet the various expectations and needs of both practitioners and participants.

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9 Sample Interview Guide
The following is an interview guide which formed the basis of the semi-structured interviews which were conducted in this research project. The interview questions were adapted to highlight the expertise of the interviewee. In some instances, this was funding related or policy focused. The following is an example of the questions posed to NGO sport-for-inclusion organisers, who made up the majority group of interviewees in this research project.

1. Can you briefly describe your role and position within the NGO you work for?
2. What are the (long-term and short-term) goals of the NGO?
3. How does this sport-for-inclusion programme try to engage with youth and/or adults in the local area?
4. What are the main challenges facing your organisation?
5. From where does your organisation receive funding? Does this influence the kinds of activities that you can organise?
6. Have you noted any change in the attitudes of the youth/adults you have worked with? In what way?
7. How does your organisation measure the success of sport-for-inclusion activities? Is it possible to measure the efficiency of sport-for-inclusion activities?
8. Do your activities serve an educational purpose?
9. Does your organisation follow a particular framework it its programme or take influence from other programmes in Finland or abroad?
10. Can you describe the motivation behind your involvement in this line of work?
11. Do you have any suggestions for improvements that could be made to sport-for-inclusion programmes operating in Helsinki?
12. What is your relationship with local authority and/or government actors taking responsibility for these services?