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Understanding North-South Relations in Sport for Development: The Case of the Mathare Youth Sports Association[1]

Abstract *Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) still follows the traditional trajectory of international development, which involves the transposition of resources from donors (Global North) to implementers (Global South) (Briggs 2008). Recent studies have called for a critical analysis of the "colonizing tendencies" (Darnell 2011: 183) within the SDP movement. This article looks at the case of the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) in Kenya – a key Southern player in the global SDP movement, which operates mainly through football programmes – and the discourse which evolved around allegations of sexual abuse and a subsequent partnership conflict with the Strømme Foundation in 2012. The case study contributes to a critical understanding of North-South power relations in the SDP sector.*

Keywords *Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), partnership, North – South relations, post-colonialism, Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA)*

1. Sport for Development and Peace: A contested arena of development

Academic interest regarding the relationship between sport and international development is a rather new phenomenon (Kidd 2008). Sport had not previously been considered to have any relevance for the development process. Only over the last 15 years has the mobilisation of sport as a 'new' means for achieving development goals emerged into an accepted field within international development practice and policies. In the aftermath of the adoption of the United Nation's resolution 58/5 on "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace" in 2003, and the

International Year for Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE) in 2005, the sector has experienced a phenomenal growth. One visible aspect of this expansion has been the mushrooming of sport and development initiatives in the Global South – the majority of them using football as a tool (Levermore/Beacom 2009; Hartmann/Kwauk 2011; Levermore 2011). Sport for development became synonymous with a new social movement which has gained global momentum. Due to its close alignment with the United Nations policy agenda, the emerging sector was termed "Sport for Development and Peace" (SDP).

As the recognition and institutionalisation of sport's role in international development have increased, so also has the interest in research on SDP (Darnell 2012). This emerging scholarly attention encouraged the establishment of sport and (international) development as a new academic field of study (Kidd 2008; Mwaanga 2013). Most of the studies attempted to evaluate how sport and football in particular, is linked to and can be mobilised towards the attainment of development goals such as health promotion, education, conflict resolution, gender equity, and the empowerment of young people (Gasser/Levinsen 2004; Beutler 2008; Schwery 2008; Coalter 2013). SDP actors and scholars alike engaged in an effort to provide evidence for the utility of sport, and to demonstrate that sport is in fact a remedy for the progress of international development (Kay 2011).

Partly as a critique of these instrumentalist approaches, a body of research in the critical sociology of sport and development emerged, analysing the movement from a broader perspective. Here, a central focus is on the examination of dominant discourses and practices and the workings of power within SDP (Darnell 2007; Black 2010; Nicholls et al. 2010; Darnell/Hayhurst 2011; Mwaanga 2011; Darnell/Hayhurst 2012). While this strand of literature is rather varied, all these studies seem to acknowledge the "importance of critical self-reflection upon the relations of power" within the field of development and sport (Darnell 2012: 2). They call for a critical analysis of the colonising tendencies within the SDP movement and the associated underpinned concepts, since certain dominant Western theories and conceptualisations would legitimise Northern-driven hegemonic practices (Darnell/Hayhurst 2011). A core issue of the critique is the notion of 'development', especially as seen and interpreted by modernisation theorists.

Within the sport and development field, the meaning of 'development' and 'sport' are often taken for granted and assumed rather than contested. Nevertheless, it is established that both are social constructions which have assumed shifting meanings for different vested interests and over time. Contemporary mainstream conceptualisations of 'development and sport' are informed by colonial discourses and a neo-liberal development paradigm, with the latter tending to recycle older elements of modernisation theory (Manzo 2007). Put in other terms, neo-colonial and neo-liberal notions of development are therefore (re-) produced in discourses which are sustained by unequal power relations (Mwaanga 2011).The concern brought to the fore here, is that if uneven power relations and related structural issues which sustain dominant discourses are overlooked, this will ipso facto impact the sustainability and effectiveness of sport as a tool for development. In this scenario, SDP does not facilitate social progress, but rather contributes to inequalities and under-development (Sidaway 2008).

Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) argue that, without a critical analysis of how "knowledge is (re)produced and relations of power are (re)enacted", the using of sport may contribute to an extension of "cultural neo-colonialism" under the guise of development (Hartmann/Kwauk 2011: 293). In such a critical discursive perspective, sport for development does not represent a new and benign model of development, but is a contested arena about the meaning of development (Long 2001; Manzo 2012: 559).

However, in-depth empirical studies are really lacking in the recent body of critical research on 'neo-colonial' relations within SDP. Lindsey and Grattan (2012) identify "a significant need for methodologically justified research that seeks to understand sport for development from the perspective of actors in the Global South" (Lindsey/Grattan 2012: 96).

Therefore, this paper applies an actor-oriented research approach to look at one of the most prolific SDP actors from the Global South, the Kenyan Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), a key NGO player in the SDP movement, which operates mainly through football programmes. We will look in-depth into North-South partnership discourses in the context of a conflict which evolved between MYSA and the Norwegian Strømme Foundation, its main donor.

The case of MYSA is particularly significant due to its geographical location and the close links with institutionalised football. Over the last

15 years (Anglophone) sub-Saharan Africa became the prime target area for SDP interventions, and football constituted its principal tool. In this regard, urban slums like Mathare in Kenya became "geographical focal points of numerous SDP activities" (Mwaanga 2011: 22). This SDP focus relates partly to the global HIV/AIDS pandemic and its discursive nexus with "black Africa" (Hardt/Negri 2001: 136). The hosting of the first FIFA World Cup on the African continent in 2010 and the FIFA social development programmes - such as Football for Hope - gave momentum to the focus on the social utility of football in Africa (SAD 2009; Alegi 2010).

That 'sport for development' in an African context almost exclusively stands for 'football for development' is not by chance. Therefore, we also look at the colonial discourse on the 'utility' of football and how football in Sub-Sahara Africa as a distinct colonial cultural form may influence contemporary social realities.

2. Postcolonial theory: An alternative reading of SDP

A critical analysis of development necessitates looking at a central issue within development: the concept of power and how it shapes developmental thinking, policy and practice (McKay 2008). As Mwaanga (2011) suggests, when it comes to relations of power within the SDP field, dominant hegemonic perspectives of development within SDP could best be understood by looking through the theoretical lens of postcolonialism.

Basically, postcolonial studies introduced a historical perspective to critically reflect on the cultural legacy of imperialism and colonialism and how these legacies shape the contemporary "postcolonial condition" (Childs/Williams 1997; Hall 1997). The colonialist intervention produced "civilizational Others" (i.e. Africa and the Orient); the role of postcolonialism is to deconstruct such stereotypical representations. The postcolonial approach owes much of its intellectual originality to Michel Foucault's work. For example, Escobar (1995) comprehends "'development' as a discourse and therefore particular (Western) regime of truth, power and knowledge" (Sidaway 2008:19).

When examining SDP more closely, neo-colonial relations of dominance become evident. In contrast to the current rhetoric of development

co-operation emphasising participation, partnership and local ownership (Kontinen 2007), SDP still follows the traditional route of international development, which essentially involves the allegedly politically neutral transposition of resources from the Global North (donors) to the Global South (implementers) (Briggs 2008). In this asymmetrical donor–recipient relationship, not only are material resources transferred, but also immaterial resources, including ideologies, knowledge and practices, which are transmitted in a unidirectional way from the North to the South (Eriksson Baaz 2005).

From a discursive perspective employing the Foucauldian concepts of power and knowledge, the transposition of these less concrete resources helps to consolidate hegemonic "regimes of truth" about development (Gledhill 1994: 126). The transposed Global Northern ideologies, knowledge and practices subsequently rationalise ways of acting and thinking about legitimate development (Sidaway 2008). This discrepancy within SDP may refer to the continuity of a notion of colonial discourse: namely, that truth regarding development is produced in the Global North and implemented in the Global South. This uneven division of labour between North and South in SDP is "based on racialized and spatialized notions of superiority" and expertise (Darnell 2007: 562).

However, there is another school of thought in the opposite direction, concerning the neo-colonial critique of the operations of SDP. Based on notions of Southern agency, the increasing critique of the Northern dominance in governing SDP has been challenged, for example by Lindsey and Grattan (2012). Grounded in empirical case studies of two Zambian communities, the authors argue that sport for development is challenged and shaped to a large degree by local actors, and therefore the influence of the Global North on local sport for development programmes would be far less than generally maintained (Lindsey/Grattan 2012). Therefore, the authors reject the strong narrative of the emerging 'hegemonic' strand of literature.

The critiques of Lindsey and Grattan (2012) are useful in two ways. First, they show that there is a need for more empirical research on the Global South to better understand the relative influences of global and local conditions on sport and development. Second, there is sufficient evidence to argue that SDP is an international practice predominantly

following the agenda of the donor countries in the North. Therefore, the notion is held that 'Northern hegemony' should not be assumed or taken as a given, but has to be analysed within a methodological framework, which is able to accommodate Southern grass-roots agency. According to Lindsey and Grattan (2012), such an actor perspective would acknowledge "the capacity of local actors to contextualize, reinterpret, resist, subvert and transform international development agendas, which, in turn, contributes to a diverse array of development practices emerging within local contexts" (Lindsey/Grattan 2012: 95).

Before we look in detail into the case of MYSA and its reinterpretation of, and resistance to, notions of partnership and development, we need to touch on the concept of partnership in SDP.

3. Partnership: the dominant modus operandi within SDP

Since the turn of the millennium, the emerging field of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) has been characterised by an enormous proliferation of projects and NGO actors, all engaged in partnerships. Therefore, the notion of partnership is a central concept in the discourse on sport and development, both among practitioners and academics.

The partnership concept emerged within the context of a shifting development aid paradigm, due to changing attitudes in the Global North (Desai 2008). From the late 1980s onwards, Northern development NGOs changed their approach towards the Global South. Instead of implementing projects directly, they moved towards a "partnership approach" (Desai 2008; Lewis 1998). It was believed that partnerships with Southern NGOs are more egalitarian since they should rest upon principles of transparency, openness and mutuality, and that they are also more effective in delivering development (Horton/Prain/Thiele 2009).

This is also the case in the field of SDP. Different forms of partnerships, including those between the donors and funders in the Global North with grass-roots organisations in the Global South (NGOs, local initiatives and networks), are viewed as inherently positive for the sustainability of sport and development interventions (Kidd 2008). The perception of North-South partnerships seems to lie at the very foundations of the

SDP approach. Northern Sport for Development and Peace stakeholders call for partnerships as an effective path to attain policy goals (Lindsey/ Banda 2011). As Lindsey (2011: 517) has observed, the partnership approach "has become ubiquitous as a modus operandi" within SDP.

Levermore (2011: 289) argues that the prevailing perception is that sport is capable of linking a diversity of different partners, and that sport is believed to offer "natural and non-political environments where partners can meet and deliver development." Partnerships within SDP are perceived as an unquestioned 'good' and a 'natural' constituent indispensable for sport and development practice. Just as in international development, in SDP too "everybody wants to be a partner with everyone or everything, everywhere" (Fowler qtd. in Harrison 2007: 391). In this respect, partnerships have not only emerged as a dominant issue in SDP policy, but have almost become a mantra in the SDP discourse.

However, partnership cannot be viewed as a 'natural' given of development practice but as a contested concept infused by relations of power. Several critical development studies have analysed the role of power dynamics in partnership relations (Lister 2000; Mancuso Brehm 2004; Eriksson Baaz 2005; Bebbington 2005). Nevertheless, the dominant development model tends to oversee "the unequal power relations that characterise the aid relationship" (Eriksson Baaz 2005: 74).

Reith (2010) and O'Reilly (2010) have elaborated on the significance of direct control and hierarchies of power within North-South partnerships. Nevertheless, one should avoid a simplistic interpretation of the existing imbalances as a conscious strategy by Northern donors to "subjugate" Southern partners (Eriksson Baaz 2005). Such a reading of partnership is based on a one-dimensional, predominately repressive notion of power.

Little empirical research or anthropological field work has been conducted on North-South relationships in SDP. In an empirical study about Nordic development workers in Tanzania, Eriksson Baaz demonstrates how tensions and conflicts characterise the partnership discourse in the development aid context. The conflicts would "reveal a discourse that is still constructed around images of the superior, reliable, efficient 'donor' in contrast to the inadequate, passive, unreliable 'partner" or recipient" (Eriksson Baaz 2005: i).

4. Football in Sub-Saharan Africa:
Sport as a colonial agent for discipline

Giulianotti (2004) and others maintain that the historical contexts of colonialism and imperialism continue to inform SDP's practice and logic. Giulianotti (2004: 367) argues that there is a "historical relationship of sport to forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism." Current sport for development interventions do take place against and within a context of colonial history and the contemporary dominant development discourse (Darnell 2007). For example, in the context of colonial education, British team sports, particularly football, were introduced to "effect personality change and instil Western moral values" (Manzo 2007: 2). Therefore, there is an imperative to locate sport for development projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, and football-based interventions, "within their historical contexts" (Giulianotti 2011: 2007).

Nicholls and Giles (2007) contend that "understanding the ways in which sport has been used as a form of assimilation and domination is necessary in order to create sport in development models that challenge, rather than re-inscribe, colonial legacies" (2007: 64). Research on sport for development interventions in the Global South has been criticised for a lack of recognition of the colonial legacy and a de-contextualised and de-historicised view of the role of contemporary sport, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa (Darby 2002). To understand contemporary, Sub-Saharan African notions of sport, and football in particular, it is suggested that we explore "the construction of football by examining the socio-historical conditions that produce and constrain understandings of sport" (Darnell 2007: 562).

The functionalist view of sport as a cost-effective and simple educational instrument to transform 'bad' attitudes of young people seems to be as old as modern sport itself (Vasili 1998). As early as the 1880s, local members of the Euro-African elite in the British occupation Gold Coast (today Ghana) organised sport activities for boys, with a clear moral vision. Athletic afternoons which also featured football should uphold the spiritual well-being of the male youth and keep them away from alcohol (Vasili 1998). This notion of sport is comparable with the understanding of sport in the rational recreation movement in England. In the 19th century,

moral reformers and industrialists propagated 'modern' leisure activities, including sports, "in an attempt to 'civilize' and 'stabilize' the working class and the urban poor" (Fair 2004: 104). The mission of these pioneering "sport evangelists" (Giulianotti 2004: 367) seems to live on in the recent popular discourse on the intrinsic positive values of sport and its capacity to influence the attitudes of young people (Wachter 2006).

To contextualise and better comprehend today's role of and discourse on football in Sub-Sahara Africa, one should investigate how the cultural practice of football and other modern team sports were diffused in former British colonies in Africa. Obviously, Africa is a vast continent, and generalisations must be avoided. However, the development of football in different parts of the continent and the concomitant cultural notions and values can be closely linked to the regime of colonial rule.

In East Africa, for example, football arrived in the 1870s, together with cricket and field hockey, on the island of Zanzibar. In the case of Kenya, Mählmann (1988) describes how Britain disregarded indigenous body and movement cultures such as the sham fights of the Massai, or indigenous hockey among Luo speakers. At the beginning of the 20th century, 'prestigious' sports such as tennis, cricket and game hunting were promoted among the White community in Kenya, while the less esteemed sports such as football or simple physical drills were believed to be appropriate for the (male) "natives" (Mählmann 1988: 157).

Only from the 1920s onwards, did missionaries, colonial officials, and teachers engage in a more systematic promotion of football among the colonial subjects. School administrators and colonial District Commissioners in particular – Mangan (1986: 19) refers to them as "muscular missionaries" – harnessed the potential of team sports as an instrument of the discipline and moral education of an emerging indigenous male elite. Western sport should assist in the transformation of the 'lazy' African character and keep indigenous youth away from the moral temptations of city life (Wachter 2006). By the year 1927, football in Kenya had already produced such an impact on Africans that a report of the Department of Education of the Kenya colony concluded: "Football and Christianity may save Africa" (Kenya Colony and Protectorate qtd. in Mählmann 1988: 161).

The imperialists saw their humanitarian mission as the protection of their child-like subjects and to civilise them – within certain boundaries.

In addition to school education for elite boys, the colonial agents considered team sports as the ideal vehicle for moral support. In the colonial sport for development model, football should thus not only shape the body, but also condition the mind (Mangan 1986). Mangan (1986) traces how the ideological belief in the team sport ethics derived from elite English public schools and the upper-class universities such as Oxford and Cambridge were transferred into colonial practice. A constituting element of the colonial 'games ethic' was to inculcate 'manliness'. In the early Victorian era, manliness was represented by virtues such as self-denial, rectitude and seriousness; later, masculinity also embraced individual qualities such as perseverance, robustness and stoicism (Newsome qtd. in Mangan 1986). Rather than through textbooks, the colonial subjects should, it was believed, learn through team sports virtues of self-control and playing by the rules, develop team spirit and internalise the collective subordination to authority (Mangan 1986).

The organisation of competitive sport by the colonial administration also promised to establish a cultural link between the colonisers and the colonised. The top-down effort to construct a shared pan-imperial identity, an "esprit de corps" (Mangan 1986: 117), should maintain colonial order – an order based on violence, violation of fundamental rights, economic exploitation and gross inequalities along race, class and gender lines (Darby 2000).

Today, football has found refuge in the heart of the majority of African men and has developed in some countries, in fact, to the extent of a (masculine) secular religion (Wachter 2002). Football has developed into the most popular sport in Sub-Sahara Africa and is a widely accepted cultural legacy of colonial imperialism. Notwithstanding this fact, the Northern dominated political economy of professional football and the Northern hegemony of football institutions remain, though not without steady and ongoing contestation from stakeholders from the African continent.

5. The case of MYSA and its relevance for Sport for Development

Within the current Sport for Development and Peace paradigm, NGOs have become the dominant organisational form for advancing

development through sport (Mwaanga 2014). While 'sport development' is largely an endeavour for sport organisations, NGOs have come to be the leading actors in pursuing development through sport (Kidd 2008). In international development studies, the meteoric rise of NGOs is interpreted in the context of a new, neo-liberal aid paradigm which has developed since the late 1980s (Desai 2008; Coalter 2010b).

Within the international SDP movement, the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) is one of the most prominent NGOs in the Global South. MYSA, established by the Canadian development consultant Bob Munro in 1987 in the Mathare slum in Nairobi, grew into the biggest African NGO in the field of sport and community services, with approximately 25,000 young participants (Coalter 2013; Hognestad/Tollisen 2004).

Around Mathare valley and its surrounding areas, MYSA runs extended youth football leagues for both boys and girls, who are linked with compulsory clean-up activities and other community services.

In addition, MYSA started or facilitated self-help SDP projects in other parts of Kenya and in other African countries, including a youth project in Southern Sudan (Leahy/Ahmed n.d.). A key element of MYSA's various programmes and projects is the education and training of young people, including issues such as HIV/AIDS prevention, peer leadership, peer coaching/refereeing, and the promotion of gender equity and youth rights. But MYSA is also a highly successful sports development project, with the professional football club Mathare United playing in Kenya's premier league and continuously developing talents for the national teams of the Football Kenya Federation (FKF) in particular for the senior teams Harambee Stars (men) and the Harambee Starlets (female).

However, a whistle-blower report in September 2011 by a Norwegian couple confronted MYSA with allegations of sexual harassment, age cheating and misappropriation of funds (Huffman et al. 2012). In March 2012, a subsequent drafted investigation report made public by Strømme Foundation – MYSAs biggest Northern funding partner – seemed to confirm the allegations in three areas. First, age cheating and identity theft in connection with its participation in international football tournaments (e.g. Norway Cup); second, misuse of funds (e.g. scholarship monies); and third, sexual abuse of minor girls by coaches (Strømme Foundation 2012a). The allegations by the Norwegian Strømme Foundation (SF), MYSAs key

donor since 1996, and a report on previous incidents published by MYSA (MYSA 2012b) have evoked much debate in the field of SDP, both in Kenya and Norway as well as on an international level.

These serious allegations prompted the Norwegian donor to put their core funding on hold while also other Northern donors withdrew large parts of their funding. In the process, SF expressed their accusations in the public media and demanded profound changes in the leadership of MYSA. MYSA rejected the accusations and blamed the Strømme Foundation of harming the good reputation and image of the organisation. Finally, in April 2012, the Strømme Foundation ended the 16 year partnership.

The conflict between the Strømme foundation and the highly decorated global pioneer of SDP and its accompanying discourses is not only relevant for the organisations involved, but may reveal ruptures in the wider sport and development field. After all, these reported cases have brought forth more essential questions about the dominant discourse. These questions include: Who might profit from the current dominant discourse and its accompanying "SDP definitions, concepts and policies" (Hayhurst 2009: 215), and who is marginalised from it?

6. The MYSA Case: Discourses about partnership conflicts and Northern dependency

This section focuses on the competing and changing views of MYSA of different stakeholders and vested interests following the open conflict with the Strømme Foundation. Empirical data on perceptions of the conflict were gathered during this author's stay in Nairobi in June 2013. MYSA staff, board members and volunteers were interviewed, in addition to indigenous stakeholders in Kenya such as sport administrators and SDP NGO activists. Furthermore, individual donors and SDP experts in the Global North were interviewed. A postcolonial theoretical perspective is employed here, capturing indigenous narratives around the incidents and how the current development model of MYSA and donor dependency is perceived. The narratives of interviewees negotiate, contradict or sustain dominant discourses on MYSA, development and partnership.

6.1 Contextualisation: The impact of the crisis

In March 2012, after the Strømme Foundation unilaterally published the draft investigation report, an open conflict emerged between MYSA and the Norwegian NGO, reflected in accusations and defences from the two organisations. The allegations were also broadly discussed in the public sphere, ranging from newspaper and TV reports in Kenya and Norway to a debate in the Kenyan parliament. Indigenous stakeholders were concerned about the incidents and engaged in explicit and informal discourses about the trustworthiness and credibility of MYSA as a promoter of development.

In April 2012, the Strømme Foundation put an end to the 16 year partnership with MYSA. Other Northern donors have either withdrawn or reduced their funding. While MYSA members admitted that they have dealt since 1991 with 34 cases in connection with sexual abuse, age cheating and corruption, MYSA has fiercely dismissed the allegations as a "witch-hunt" (Toskin 2012).

The immediate negative effects of the withdrawal were enormous: MYSA lost almost half of their annual funding. The NGO was not able to pay their staff's salaries for months and eventually dismissed 14 out of 56 staff members. According to one statistic, the number of registered teams in the 16 zones dropped from 1700 from 2012 to 789 in June 2013. This constituted a decrease of 53.6 per cent. The number of girl teams according to this statistic dropped from 320 to 143 (55.3 per cent) in 2013. In the under-14 age group, 14 (75 per cent) of the girls' teams withdrew.[2]

During the fieldwork and in the interviews, the Northern donor's withdrawal was perceived as 'unfair' and as having extremely adverse effects on the sport for development programmes, the organisation and the community. Common references to Strømme were that they "destroyed MYSA" (Interview 9) or "closed the shop" and that "the moment they pulled out we almost, almost went under" (Interview 4). Two main areas of concern emerged: one, the cutback of the football programme, including travel opportunities to the Norway Cup; and, second, mistrust and losing credibility with the community.

However, the data also reveals that the MYSA volunteers and staff share a perception that they are capable of reacting pro-actively to the crisis and devising alternatives to cope with donor dependency.

6.2 Northern blaming:
From donor darling to a "bunch of molesters"[3]

After the allegations against MYSA became public, the image of the SDP 'darling project' started to transform. A discourse evolved which turned the formerly iconic SDP model into its opposite. The trusted, reliable and effective partner transformed into an organisation "full of thieves, age cheats and sexual abusers" (MYSA 2012a). In Norway, a discourse evolved which constructed on the hand an image of the 'Self' of the Northern donor as ethically superior, democratic and high-toned in contrast to the African 'Other', imagined as morally rotten, corrupt and not sincere in protecting potential victims of sexual abuse. In a press release announcing the end of the partnership with MYSA, the CEO of the Strømme Foundation stated:

> "We deeply regret that we have come to this. It's the girls and the boys in Mathare who are the losers. We were hoping to arrive at a common platform where we could work together with a renewed focus on rights for young girls and boys in Mathare. We had a desire to do that together with MYSA. Now, unfortunately, we see that we have a different understanding of reality in relation to this and we regret that we have come to a situation where MYSA does not appear to be an organization we can continue to cooperate with, where we focus on the abuse of power and practical rights work." (Strømme Foundation 2012b)

In this statement the Northern donor is presented as the sole guardian of human rights and true protector of the youth in the Mathare slums, youth whose rights are continuously violated. The Southern partner is portrayed as unwilling to challenge "the abuse of power" and to work sincerely towards the protection of youth rights.

The Northern branding of the Southern NGO as a collective "molester" may also refer to a colonial imagining of a high level and uncontrolled "black sexuality" (Hardt/Negri 2001: 136). The Northern narratives which blame MYSA for misconduct are underpinned by a Western discourse of promoting human rights, democracy and equality.

The perception that a gross difference in the interpretation of the events at MYSA existed, depending on the relative cultural and geographic

position and the position in the development aid chain, is expressed by a Norwegian NGO representative (male):

> "[Strømme] managed it as poorly as they possibly could. There was a sort of unilateral decision making all along the road even though they are giving lip service to a bilateral decision making process. The reality was that they for instance were releasing their attitudes or their decisions prior to any discussion with MYSA in the media actually. MYSA would learn after the fact of various decisions. And the decisions were made very much on a basis of a Norwegian cultural acceptance or non-acceptance of the issues and not being a voice for the MYSA cultural context. I thought they managed it very, very poorly." (Interview 17)

Here, it is suggested that the Northern donor was ignorant of the local context and discourse and followed rigidly its own principles, based on a Western notion of defending the rights of children and young people. As Eriksson Baaz (2005: 117) observed in her study on development aid in Tanzania, the "image of a democratic Self [...] reflects the Nordic or Scandinavian identity, where the Self is constructed as the perfection of democratic, humanist Western tradition". In their claim to act as the true custodian of youth rights in Nairobi, SF adopts such a perfect humanist Scandinavian identity.

6.3 Constructing MYSA self-identity: Rebranding the slum

Parallel to the creation of an iconic MYSA model by the Northern Other, particularly by the SDP development academics and donors, MYSA also nurtured and constructed an image of the Self (Eriksson Baaz 2005). The discursive representations employed by MYSA and its organisational constituent for creating the self-image were neither random nor purposeless.

A key instrument for rebranding the stigmatised image of Mathare valley and neighbouring areas is the football club Mathare United FC, established by MYSA in 1994. The symbolic role of the professional football club for the stigmatised community is stressed by a MYSA board member:

> "we have changed the name. If you go around the country and you mention the name Mathare, the first thing they talk is "Mathare United football oh, they are

good" you know and so it helped to inspire poor kids around the country, […] because they are poor and they know our guys were just as poor as they were and know the play in the Kenyan Premier league and on the Kenya national team and if they can do it I can do it. So it had a national impact. It particularly changed the image of Mathare people [...] before you never ever admitted to anybody you are from Mathare." (Interview 5)

A boost for linking the name Mathare with 'success' and 'achievement' was in 2008, when Mathare United FC (MUFC) won the Kenyan Premier League. The local media commonly refer to Mathare United FC to as the "slum boys"[4]. It can be read as a gendered reference to a positive 'street kids' mentality, characterised by a fighting spirit and resilience. MUFC has also become a national model of good practice, as the sport journalist expressed in the interview: "the fact that quite a number of Mathare United players played for the national team, which is a unifying symbol, it was very easy for MU to be seen" (Interview 10). Therefore, MUFC provides a source of pride for the communities in the Nairobi Eastlands.

6.4 Negotiating and contesting partnerships:
The ideal relationship

Black (2010:125) noted that within SDP the key buzzword "partnership" has "become profoundly ambiguous in [its] [...]meanings and implications". However, the data shows that the research participants, both in the North and in the South, had a clear perception of what partnership should be. When describing the characteristics of good partnership reference was made to attributes such as "mutual respect" (Interview 3), understanding, and, most importantly, "trust" (Interview 9). Speaking about the ideal division of roles between the North and the South, the MYSA executive staff added:

"The South partner is the one [who] basically understands the problems on the ground, because they live it every day. But of course the North partner also has their responsibility [...] to understand what is it you are targeting, what change you are trying to make, so I would say it should be a relationship where the South is able to clearly define what their goal is as an organisation and the [North] should basically seek to listen more. If you don't listen too keenly you may miss the point." (Interview 3)

In the same way, a MYSA senior staff member stresses the need for Northern donors to get acquainted with the cultural and social context in which the Southern partner operates (Interview 4).

Against the backdrop of an image of an ideal partnership relation based on mutuality, respect and reciprocal relations, research participants overwhelmingly described their experience with the Strømme-MYSA partnership in negative terms. Research respondents expressed feelings of being abandoned or 'let-down' by a powerful Northern donor, which is perceived as acting arbitrarily in relation to the beneficiaries in the South. The findings overwhelmingly demonstrate a perception of Northern dominance and Southern dependency in partnership relations. The criticism which was articulated encompassed confirmations of dominant partnership discourse approaches but also elements of discursive resistance. Pointing to the sudden shift in the partnership approach on the part of the Norwegian partner, a MYSA board member complained:

"Let's look at the big picture. Here we have an example of an Northern NGO who doesn't bother to see what a particular organisation [is] doing, takes a single whistle blower's letter after working for 15 years, [...] instead of saying like his predecessors 'we have a problem how can we help' he turns it around in a way to promote himself and make himself look good as the archangel fighting sexual abuse and age-cheating in the South. [...] And he repeatedly went behind the backs of Mathare youth to the media in Norway. Does a partner act like that? Is that partnership, in any stretch of the imagination?" (Interview 5)

A recurring theme in the narratives was the perception of a disproportional reaction of the Northern partner based on ignorance about the local context and an unwillingness to listen to the Southern partner. This haphazard and paternalistic conduct from a position of power is also asserted by the representative of the international SDP NGO in Ghana:

"The problem emanating from this incident is not what Strømme accused MYSA of, but what it did and the judgment it passed, the way it went about it. For me this is the crux of the problem: A well to do foundation in the Global North funding an organisation in the Global South and thus perceives to have

the right to do with the organisation what it feels and acts arbitrarily, expects to be obeyed and followed." (Interview 14)

Moreover, the interviewee's responses clearly reveal that MYSA's main donor is perceived to lack commitment to address the problems which arose. According to Nicholls et al. (2010: 258), a committed partnership in SDP "involves a long-term commitment to create forums to share successes and challenges such that admitting to failure does not jeopardize a Southern partners' funding". In contrast, a MYSA executive staff member identified the lack of an "error culture" (Interview 3) and a willingness to admit failure.

This Southern assumption about the Northern partner's lack of ownership for failures relates to an idealised construction of the SDP 'flagship' project, MYSA. Northern donors, including the UN and FIFA, seek and make use the imagery of football playing "slum" children to illustrate the 'power' of sport, but are hesitant to be associated with aspects of the harsh realities of underdevelopment (Manzo 2007). Northern donors such as the Strømme Foundation depend overwhelmingly on private donations, and the retention of a seamless public image is a key objective. Any association with issues such as corruption or human rights violations is strictly avoided.

6.5 Dependency and disempowerment of Southern SDP NGOs

Issues of donor-recipient relationships and the dangers of promoting new patterns of dependency are a concern within SDP (Coalter 2010a, 2013). Coalter rejects the assertion that the quick growth in influence of SDP NGOs would represent "new forces of neo-colonialism, with their main leadership and strategies being formulated in the West" (Coalter 2010a: 17). Based on the empirical example of MYSA, Coalter argues that dependency would not constitute the "predominant relationship" between Northern donors and Southern NGOs (Coalter 2010a, 2013: 17). Coalter contends that MYSA was "strong enough to negotiate funding on the basis of its own definition of its needs and approach" (Coalter 2013: 17).

This research's findings evidently demonstrate the opposite. Despite its privileged position within the development aid chain and its access to transnational networks, MYSA is highly dependent on the transfer

of resources from the North. Besides, their negotiating power vis-a-vis Northern agencies to define their own "needs and approach" (Coalter 2013: 17) is alarmingly vulnerable, as revealed in the current partnership conflict. Looking through a postcolonial lens, Nicholls et al. (2010) argue that the dominant development discourse would have a disempowering effect on Southern actors:

> "Partnerships between the North and South, funding donors and recipients […] are fundamentally shaped by the pervasive discourse of development. The discourse positions the North as the benevolent, educated development worker and the South (specifically the African continent) as the poverty stricken and disease-ridden child in need of salvation." (Nicholls et al. 2010: 250)

The findings show that the discourse on the allegations and the partnership conflict were informed by ideological and normative assumptions about 'development' on the part of the various vested interests. On the one hand, MYSA's criticism of the Norwegian donor employed representations of a stereotypical European 'colonial master' – paternalistic, dictatorial and racist. On the other hand, the Strømme Foundation's critique of MYSA appears to be sustained by conceptualisations of modernisation theory, which blames indigenous culture for the failure to 'develop' and to become 'democratic', while neglecting structural disparities of power (McKay 2008). For example, MYSA produced cartoons (see below), which used images combining representations of a paternalistic, colonial missionary with images of an autocratic development aid donor from the 1960s.

Photo 1: MYSA –Not for sale
Source: MYSA 2012[5]

Photo 2: MYSA – Who pays the piper calls the tune
Source: MYSA 2012[6]

Kurt Wachter

These cartoons constitute a form of visual resistance, since they engage in forms of counter-discourse regarding the perceived dominant and paternalistic conduct of a powerful development aid agent.

Furthermore, the narratives of the Southern research participants conceived the partnership conflict with the Strømme Foundation as a disempowering experience and a contradiction of their notions of 'partnership' and 'development'. The partnership relation with the main donor is perceived to be dominated by a paternalistic, authoritarian colonial attitude. A recurrent theme raised by the Southern participants was also the emphasis on relations based on trust, integrity and personal bonds (Interview 3; Interview 9), while the Northern perceptive stressed bureaucratic and policy factors (e.g. salience of a rights approach) (Interview 17; Strømme Foundation 2012a).

This research's findings clearly reveal that Mathare Youth Sports Association is integrated into a Northern-dominated, international development aid chain which entails a variety of dependencies and vulnerabilities. The perception of a structural dependency of Southern NGOs and Community-based Organisations is also evidenced by several development studies (Reith 2010). For example, Hearn (qtd. in Manzo 2007: 555) argues that all FIFA Football for Hope project partners are dependent and that "these NGOs thus form part of a social group that is reliant on external resources and patronage." It is suggested that MYSA's destiny continues to lie to a large degree in the control of the North. However, a recurring vision of becoming less vulnerable and dependent and of the need to increase local autonomy and sustainability has emerged amongst the Southern interviewees.

7. Conclusion: Decolonising SDP theory and practice

Despite the self-perception of SDP of being a "new movement" (Kidd 2008) and acting according to universal principles of global fairness, equality and justice, this article showed that SDP shares identical issues and challenges with mainstream development cooperation. It is argued that SDP is characterised by an uneven international division of labour, whereby donors and agencies in the Global North devise policies

and priorities which are then implemented in the Global South (Mwaanga 2011; Darnell/Hayhurst 2012).

The dominant narrative within SDP is that sport, and more particularly football, is a universally applicable tool for tackling problems associated with underdevelopment and marginalisation. SDP projects would work on the basis of 'partnership', which has become the dominant modus operandi, as well as a goal at the same time. In the SDP policy discourse, partnerships are understood as a 'natural' and 'self-evident' approach for the usage of sport as an instrument for achieving development goals.

However, as Foucault (1980) argued and the case of MYSA confirmed, the production of knowledge and discourses is shaped by unequal relations of power (Foucault 1980), which seriously affect the SDP movement and undermine efforts for partnership. Thus, we may conclude that the current hegemonic strand of SDP literature reveals methodological shortcomings in terms of capturing Global Southern perspectives. In contrast, an actor-oriented approach informed by social constructionism is useful for analysing Southern perceptions of sport for development and social change. The case study of MYSA – Strømme Foundation has helped us to grasp the conflicts between Northern donors and Southern NGOs as the outcome of ongoing struggles over resources, meanings and control (Long 2001).

The case study confirmed that the politics of partnerships in SDP still follow a long-established top-down approach where Northern actors transfer funds, infrastructure and knowledge to the Global South (Nicholls et al. 2010:8).

Furthermore, in this 'partnership', Southern NGOs and Community-based Organisations are constructed as the "inadequate, passive, unreliable 'partner'" in dire need of Western support and know-how (Eriksson Baaz 2005: i; Darnell 2007). The Northern partner, on the other hand, is constructed as the efficient, superior and reliable "donor" (Eriksson Baaz 2005: i). While the Southern actors might be perceived as "'passive', they are not actually so in reality, as we have seen in the case of MYSA. Southern Actors may reproduce a dominant Northern development discourse, but they are also engaged in counter-discourse and contest dominant representations. SDP models are not simply transposed

from the Global North to the Global South, but are resisted, appropriated and redefined. Consequently, future research should focus on "localizing Global Sport for Development" by emphasising local narratives and making local voices heard (Banda et al. 2014:1).

However, as long as Global Southern partners are not recognised as providing valuable contributions to the partnership process, "it merely perpetuates a cycle of domination of the donor/recipient relationship instead of a partnership approach" (Nicholls et al. 2010: 250). Therefore, developing alternate, non-colonial frameworks of North-South partnership will enlarge the sustainability of SDP programmes and improve the legitimacy of the SDP approach.

Despite ongoing post-colonial power relations, it is possible to achieve more egalitarian and empowering partnership relations. According to Nicholls et al. (2010: 257), this would be by acknowledging that all parties involved have a credible and legitimate contribution to make, which includes "the privileging of formerly subjugated knowledge. Concerning MYSA and other Southern SDP NGOs, there seems to be a challenge to advance to the next step in the decolonisation process. Against the backdrop of the paternalistic and disempowering experiences with the Strømme Foundation, the emphasis must be on issues such as local autonomy, local and regional partnerships and the advancement of South-South exchange.

Finally, the MYSA–Strømme case has opened up questions on the relation between SDP and human rights which go beyond the particular case. Previously, issues of sexual abuse, corruption and human rights violations were usually treated as development problems associated solely with the deprived target groups, but never with SDP NGOs. These issues were considered to be outside the SDP movement and external to the SDP ethos. The MYSA case suggests that sport and development organisations and practitioners themselves can act as perpetrators. It thus becomes apparent that sport and SDP practice is not a priori a force for the social good (Coakley 2011). This recognition leads to a whole host of related questions about human rights and ethics and democracy in SDP. It is hoped that this study will contribute to wider discussions which go beyond sport for development.

1   This article is based on the author's MA dissertation: Wachter, Kurt (2014): North-South partnerships and power relations in Sport for Development. The case of Mathare Youth Sports Association. Southampton: Southampton Solent University.

2   The statistics on team registration according to age group and zones were gathered in June 2013 and are based on the figures as they were displayed at the MYSA headquarter office.

3   Interview 10: Kenyan stakeholder, sport media, male.

4   MUFC refer to themselves as "slum boys". The official website www.mathareunitedfc.co.ke is called the "Home of Slum Boys".

5   The cartoon was published on on the website of the Mathare Youth Sports Association: www.mysakenya.org, October 2012.

6   See footnote 5.

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Interviews

Interview 1: NGO partner INEX-SDA, Czech Republic, male, 31 May 2013 (Skype interview).

Interview 2: Northern SDP academic, United Kingdom, male, 3 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 3: MYSA executive staff, male, 6 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 4: MYSA senior staff, male, 6 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 5: MYSA Board of Trustees member, male, 7 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 6: MYSA volunteer, Community Services, male, 8 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 7: MYSA volunteer, Executive Council, female, 8 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 8: MYSA volunteer, zonal chair, female, 9 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 9: MYSA senior staff, female, 10 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 10: Kenyan stakeholder, sport media, male, 11 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 11: Kenyan stakeholder, Football Kenya Federation, female, 18 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 12: Mathare United FC administrator, male, 19 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 13: Kenyan stakeholder, SDP NGO, male, 19 June 2013 (personal interview).

Interview 14: Southern SDP NGO expert, Right to Play Ghana, male, 30 July 2013 (email interview).

Interview 15: Strømme Foundation senior staff A, Northern funding partner, male, 14 August 2013 (Skype interview).

Interview 16: Strømme Foundation senior staff B, Northern funding partner, male, 14 August 2013 (Skype interview).

Interview 17: Norwegian People's Aid staff, Northern NGO partner, male, 27 August 2013 (phone interview).

ABSTRACT *Der neue Sektor „Sport für Entwicklung und Frieden" (SDP) scheint weiterhin den traditionellen Mustern der Entwicklungzusammenarbeit zu folgen: Materielle und immaterielle Ressourcen werden vom Globalen Norden in den Globalen Süden transferiert (Briggs 2008). Daher wird eine kritische Analyse der „kolonisierenden Tendenzen" (Darnell 2011: 183) innerhalb der SDP-Bewegung gefordert. Der Artikel befasst sich mit dem Fall der Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) in Kenia, einem Hauptakteur der globalen SDP-Bewegung der hauptsächlich durch Fußballprogramme operiert. Analysiert wird der Diskurs rund um die Anschuldigungen wegen sexuellen Missbrauchs und einen daraus resultierenden Partnerschaftskonflikt mit der Strømme Foundation im Jahr 2012. Die Fallstudie trägt zu einem kritischen Verständnis der Nord-Süd-Machtbeziehungen im SDP-Sektor bei.*

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