

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

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## The experience and effect of team sport in a migrant culture

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## Youth, team sports and active citizenship

- Combining team sports with mentoring and coaching

- **The aim of the team sport part of the overall project were:**
  - To explore how identity, psychosocial resilience and social capability could be develop through team sports, with the aim to strengthen active citizenship
- **Idea: We believe that migrant boys are in need to be taken care of and supported in terms of meeting the society and growing personally**
- **Reason: Migrant boys have bigger challenges to thrive in school and to perceive themselves as integrated in the social life of the local community and civil society**
- **Perspective: Too often, they have their life separated from the main stream society and thus experience excluded**



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## Team sport as part of a larger study

### Where, who and how?

- **Context: Lower secondary school in Copenhagen with 80+% of pupils having a non-Danish ethnic background**
- **Involving 33 boys grade 6-9 (12-16 years)**
- **Collaboration with a local soccer club (Nørrebro United)**
- **Involving 3 soccer coaches and club affiliated**




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## The structure of the project



2-years intervention (Aug. 2013 - June 2015)

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## What are we aiming at with our interventions?

- **Developing psychosocial resilience** (= the ability to cope with adversity and to handle psychosocial challenges → develop self-esteem and personal learning ability)
- **Strengthening social cohesion** among the boys involved and ultimately **strengthening social capital**
- **Developing the cultural and sports participation in the local community** by including voluntary workers, ressource persons and institutions
  - **doing community action research** (including qualitative and quantitative studies - partner/control school)

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## The soccer part of the project

Period and activity	Participants	Aim	Data collection
August 2013 - June 2015	33 boys	Invite the boys to take part in <b>creating their own "life project"</b>	<b>Observation</b> for a two year period
3 x training a week + matches	6th - 9th grade		<b>Interviews</b>
Coach education and/or judge education	Age 12-16 years	Develop <b>personal life skills</b>	
Other social activities		New <b>role models</b> in the community	

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## Multidisciplinary approach

- **Community psychology** (Kloos, 2005)  
 "... seeks to enhance theoretical and practical understanding of human behavior in community contexts; promote the competence, resilience, and well-being of individuals and communities; and prevent problem behaviors and other harmful outcomes at the individual and community level."
- **Social capital** (Putnam, 2001)  
 "... social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them."
- **Psychosocial resilience** (Rutter, 2000)  
 "... processes, which affect that development reaches a satisfying result, in spite of the child (adolescent ed.) experience with situations, which might mean a relative high risk of developing problems or deviations"

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## Research design of the soccer project

**Qualitative study (including 14 boys, 6-9 graders and two focusgroup interviews and control group) – supported by MSc Cathrine Fried**

- **Interviews** (semi-structured) supported by picture material illustrating different situations, expressions and feelings
- **Focus group** interview + probes with 2 groups with 4 participants each
- **Participant observation** – included as validation
- **Hermeneutic analysis** in regard to the boys' experience of and reflections about being part of the soccer project
  - Transcriptions → coding → categorization → conception of themes

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## Results

Three main themes derived from the data:

1. Participants reported to have **developed their social capabilities** in the school environment
2. Participants (especially in the coach education program) showed a more **profound understanding of the structure of the local society**
3. Social and cultural **coherence in the team** has been expressed to be enhanced due to the study



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## Discussion & conclusion

### Developing social capability, identity and active citizenship through soccer

- **Social capability and cultural coherence**  
 Engaging meaningful adults (soccer coaches and other volunteers from local area) and peers have shown to improve the participants perceived social capabilities in school (Kloos et al., 1997)  
 → A community psychology approach seems to play a role in this
- **Identity**  
 Social resilience enhanced (Waataar et al., 2004)  
 → Football (like coaching) may contribute to this
- **Understanding the structure of the local society** (active citizenship)  
 The more we connect with other people the more we trust them and vice versa (Putnam, 1995)  
 → Soccer seems make way for this connection, ultimately bridging people and cultures

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## Thank you for your attention!



Thanks also to all the coaches, volunteers and boys who participated in the project!

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