

UNIVERSITY OF DEUSTO  
Faculty of Social and Human Sciences

***Sport for Development and Peace: An exploration through mediated communication and digital methods***

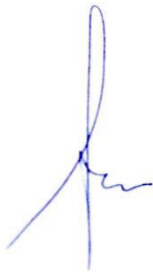
A thesis by a compendium of publications in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Leisure, Culture and Communication for Human Development.

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## **Abstract**

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“Sport for Development and Peace” (SDP) is a large global field in which sports, physical activities, and games are used to address non-sporting goals of social development and peacebuilding. The proliferation and acknowledgement of SDP organizations as enablers of sustainable development coincides with some fragmented evidence about the inequality in the field’s structure since some of them have fewer resources and are dependent on others. However, the scale of inequality is not known, and its analysis is complicated by the great diversity of stakeholders and practices, unclear boundaries of the field, and the lack of large-scale mapping of SDP and elaborated methodology for description of the global SDP structure. Relying on mediated communication and digital methods, this research reveals inequality in the structure of stakeholders and practices of the global SDP field in terms of organizational diversity and geopolitical location. The methodology of SDP research is enhanced by the use of hyperlink network analysis, web search engine data, and elaboration of a conceptual framework and model for definition of SDP boundaries. The results show an unbalanced distribution of varied types of stakeholders, with SDP-specialized agencies and the global South stakeholders being minorities and a larger share of practice-oriented organizations in the global South compared to the global North. Affiliation to the global North or South and type of organization are important characteristics for the patterns of connection distribution in the global SDP network. SDP implementing agencies and the global South stakeholders have similar patterns of relations, which have negative implications for their prominence in the SDP network: they do not tend to place in-group links and the number of references they place to other stakeholders is highly unbalanced with respect to the number of the reciprocated references. In general, the connections in the SDP network are very unevenly distributed, with clear-cut leaders and outsiders. Different types of organizations show varying capacities for leadership in the field, and geopolitical location is an important characteristic for explaining leadership patterns. Additionally, the global South is underrepresented in the English language context, which is the most important in the prominence of SDP, if compared to the Spanish, French, and Russian language

contexts. The salience of SDP varies across countries, with some countries having a higher interest in SDP within their own countries than others. Furthermore, the research analyses the ways to advance equality of opportunities for the SDP stakeholders. Additionally, the effectiveness of mediated communication and digital methods for the description of the global SDP field is argued, and the advantages and difficulties of the methodology are discussed. Finally, a methodological ground for further empirical research is elaborated by clarifying SDP boundaries in a conceptual framework and providing a model with original set of differentiating criteria. Future research lines are proposed, which include theoretical and methodological ground for following analysis of inequality in the SDP field.

**Keywords:** sport for development and peace, inequality, mediated communication, digital methods, networks.

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## List of publications

This dissertation is based on the following publications:

**Publication 1:** Herasimovich, V., & Alzua-Sorzabal, A. (2021). Communication network analysis to advance mapping ‘sport for development and peace’ complexity: Cohesion and leadership. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 56(2), 170–193. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690220909748>

**Publication 2:** Herasimovich V., & Alzua-Sorzabal, A. (in press) “Sport for Development and Peace” before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: Using internet search data for monitoring and explaining issue salience. In M. J. Pando & J. Doistua (Eds.), *La sociedad PostCovid*. Fragua.<sup>1</sup>

**Publication 3:** Herasimovich, V., & Alzua Sorzabal, A. (2020). A conceptual framework for the definition of the “Sport for Development and Peace” field and the location of best practices. In I. Lazcano Quintana & A. Díaz Hernández (Eds.), *Representaciones sociales y educativas del ocio* (pp. 49–69). Universidad de Deusto.

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**Publication 1:** Herasimovich, V., & Alzua-Sorzabal, A. (2021). Communication network analysis to advance mapping ‘sport for development and peace’ complexity: Cohesion and leadership. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 56(2), 170–193. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690220909748>

V. Herasimovich conceived the project, designed the study, reviewed the literature, collected, visualized, analyzed, and interpreted the data; drafted the paper; and made the final approval of the paper to be published.

A. Alzua-Sorzabal supervised the project; made substantial contributions to the design of the study by proposing to apply the method of social network analysis, indicating relevant social network analysis measures and interpreting them; revised the draft critically for important intellectual content such as enhancing focus on power relations; and gave the final approval to the paper to be published.

**Publication 2:** Herasimovich V., & Alzua-Sorzabal, A. (in press) “Sport for Development and Peace” before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: Using internet search data for monitoring and explaining issue salience. In M. J. Pando & J. Doistua (Eds.), *La sociedad PostCovid*. Fragua.

V. Herasimovich conceived the project, designed the study, reviewed the literature, collected, visualized, analyzed, and interpreted the data; drafted the paper; and gave the final approval to the paper to be published.

A. Alzua Sorzabal supervised the project; revised the draft critically for improving its argumentation about the global North/South; and gave the final approval to the paper to be published.

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V. Herasimovich conceived the project, reviewed the literature, drafted the paper, and made the final approval of the paper to be published.

A. Alzua Sorzabal supervised the project; made contributions to the design of the study by proposing to elaborate a model for the conceptual framework; revised the draft critically for important intellectual content such as elaboration of more precise coordinate lines in the model; and gave the final approval to the paper to be published.



# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Significance of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP)**

Humanitarian action and development efforts worldwide increasingly rely on the intentional use of sport to tackle social issues along with other interventions aiming at alleviating human suffering, bringing change into the lives of poor, conflict- and violence-affected communities and providing economic and educational opportunities for the most underprivileged (Black, 2010, 2019; Dudfield, 2018; Levermore, 2008). An important milestone of this process is the recognition of sport as “an important enabler of sustainable development” by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly’s Resolution 70/1 “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (United Nations General Assembly, 2015, p. 10). In development discourses, the varied initiatives using sport for achieving non-sporting goals are widely known as “sport for development and peace” (SDP), while other terms such as “development through sport,” “sport in development,” “sport for change,” and “sport-based youth development” have been introduced as well (Coalter, 2009, 2015; Jones et al., 2017; Levermore & Beacom, 2009).

In its broadest sense, SDP is “the large and rapidly growing global domain in which sports, games and physical activities are used to pursue diverse non-sporting social goals” (Giulianotti et al., 2020, pp. 1–2). The goals of sport-related interventions are largely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (and previously with the Millennium Development Goals), but they are not limited by the UN’s agenda, being as diverse as empowerment and integration of underprivileged groups, gender equality, health education, building skills for employment, enhancing school

results, and peacebuilding (Beutler, 2008; Dudfield, 2018; Lindsey & Darby, 2018; Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2006)<sup>2</sup>.

Even so, the idea of “sport for good” is not new and its history goes back at least to the XIX century but the recent mobilization of sport for the achievement of development goals is unique by its scope and quality (Darnell et al., 2019; Millington & Kidd, 2019). In the 1990s, the international SDP field, or sector, has emerged, and since then it has proliferated worldwide, consisting of hundreds of organizations that deliver SDP and support it with material and symbolic resources (Giulianotti, 2019; Giulianotti et al., 2019; Suzuki, 2019).

By the third decade of the XXI century, SDP acquired several characteristics of an institutionalized field: specific knowledge domain (experts, manuals), SDP-dedicated organizations, work positions focused on SDP, and funding schemes (Giulianotti, 2019). The knowledge-building in SDP is supported by a substantial increase in published research since 2000 (Schulenkorf et al., 2016), which permits scholars to characterize SDP as “a heavily researched subject” (Giulianotti et al., 2019, p. 411). Importantly, the current manifestation of “sport for good” is characterized by the proliferation of “SDP organizations” that are non-for-profits or social enterprises, specialized in development through sport worldwide (Suzuki, 2019; Svensson & Woods, 2017). Furthermore, the SDP field is distinctive by its growing networks of delivery and support organizations

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the program “Yuwa” uses education and team sports “to build character, confidence, and courage” of “girls from impoverished families” in India, and this way to empower them to break the cycle of poverty (Yuwa, 2021). Another project “LaLiga, Valores y Oportunidad” (“LaLiga, Values and Opportunities”) seeks to keep away from violence and gangs about 26000 children through the regular football practice in El Salvador, according to an article in the newspaper “*El País*” (R. S. & P. V. R., 2021).

that join efforts in leveraging the potential of sport to contribute to individual and social well-being (Hambrick et al., 2019; Straume, 2019)<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, SDP is a large global and institutionalized field of sport-related social practice, supported by mainstream development policies, having the potential for improving people's lives, and gaining legitimacy for its further presence and expansion in the modern world (Dudfield, 2018; Giulianotti, 2019; Giulianotti et al., 2019).

## **1.2. Research gaps**

The proliferation of SDP in mainstream development policies coincides with some evidence about inequality in the structure of the global SDP field, where “inequality” is understood as unequal (but not necessarily always unjust) distribution of opportunities and resources (Koh, 2020) and “structure” refers to enduring patterns of arrangements (Hunt, 2007). Thus, scholars point at a dependent situation of some organizations in the field and a hegemonic position of others (Giulianotti et al., 2016; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Levermore, 2009; McSweeney et al., 2019).

The examples of inequalities have been found in the relations of the global North and the global South<sup>4</sup> agencies (e.g., Darnell, 2010; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012; Giulianotti et al., 2016; Levermore, 2009; Lindsey et al., 2017; McSweeney et al., 2019; Nicholls et al., 2011). On the one hand, the analysis of power dynamics between the global North

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<sup>3</sup> Among the largest networks, there are the International Platform on Sport and Development ([www.sportanddev.org](http://www.sportanddev.org)), Beyond Sport Network ([www.beyondsport.org/Network](http://www.beyondsport.org/Network)), Laureus Sport for Good ([www.laureus.com/sport-for-good](http://www.laureus.com/sport-for-good)), Sport for Social Change Networks in Brazil and South Africa ([rems.org.br](http://rems.org.br), [www.sscn.co.za](http://www.sscn.co.za)), and Streetfootballworld network ([www.streetfootballworld.org](http://www.streetfootballworld.org)).

<sup>4</sup> The concepts of “global South” and “global North” denote distinctions between, on the one hand, the low- and middle-income economies located in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Latin America, and the Caribbean and, on the other hand, all high-income economies and middle-income economies located in Europe (Clarke, 2018). The terms differ from other synonymous terminology such as “Third World” and “developing countries” by marking “a shift from a central focus on development or cultural difference toward an emphasis on geopolitical relations of power” (Dados & Connell, 2012, p. 12).

and the global South has pointed at a hegemonic character of their relations (Darnell, 2010; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012; McSweeney et al., 2019). Darnell and Huish (2015) underline that “relations of power in SDP often remain structured in a top-down or hegemonic manner due in large part to the access to resources governed by broader global economics” (p. 129). In particular, the dominant position of the global North in SDP policies, ideologies, financial resources, and governance has been exposed (Hayhurst, 2009; Levermore, 2009; Lindsey et al., 2017; Straume, 2019). Also, there are subjugated voices and knowledge from SDP practitioners in the global South (Nicholls et al., 2011).

On the other hand, some scholars have challenged the view of the SDP field as dominated by the global North by providing evidence of “primarily indigenous” organizations, with “limited international input” (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012, p. 91). While the northern-driven and “decentered” perspectives are not contradictory but rather complementary perspectives (Levermore & Beacom, 2012), the extent to which each of these perspectives characterizes SDP is not known. There is little evidence base for having more precise and extended characteristics of the global North/South power relations in SDP as far as the research relies on qualitative or locally-focused analyses and does not embrace the global SDP field.

In addition to geo-political forces, scholarship points at unbalanced relations in multi-stakeholder partnerships for the implementation of SDP projects, when top-down manifestations predominate over bottom-up initiatives (Black, 2019; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Straume, 2019). Cooperation is often needed for the viability of SDP programs because SDP NGOs cannot always carry out projects alone and they rely on the support of the private sector, national governments, larger NGOs, and intergovernmental organizations (Hambrick et al., 2019; Lindsey & Banda, 2011; Lindsey & Bitugu, 2019).

Thus, some organizations appear in dependent positions, which adds to the unequal power relations in the field.

A significant ground for the inequality between different types of stakeholders is created by the great variety of SDP agencies, differing by their resources and status and being as diverse as private organizations, mainstream and radical NGOs, national agencies, intergovernmental organizations, sports federations, and new social movements (Giulianotti, 2011b). However, as in the case of the global North/South division, little empirical evidence does not permit to have more definite conclusions about the inequality between particular types of stakeholders of the global SDP field. Nor the distribution of varied types of SDP stakeholders worldwide neither the frequency of patterns of their connection are known.

Some more knowledge is available about the prominent organizations in the SDP structure (Beutler, 2008; Giulianotti, 2019; Giulianotti et al., 2016; Straume, 2019). Thus, the prominence of the UN, the International Olympic Committee, and Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) have been largely acknowledged (Beutler, 2008; Burnett, 2017; Millington, 2019). Among the SDP organizations dedicated to the implementation of on-ground projects, experts underscore Mathare Youth Sports Association and Right to Play (Darnell et al., 2019). However, the analysis of prominence in the SDP field is qualitative, and it is limited by the analysis of particular cases of prominent organizations (such as the UN) or by a focus on local manifestations (e.g., Beutler, 2008; Lindsey & Banda, 2011). Thus, a selective approach to the description of prominent agencies in the SDP field might be missing some other prominent stakeholders of the field or the organizations with the potential to become new leaders.

Considering the existing research gaps and lack of knowledge about the global SDP field, this doctoral project aims to search for answers for the following research questions:

**RQ 1.** To what extent is inequality present in the structure of organizations and practices of the global Sport for Development and Peace field in terms of organizational diversity and geopolitical location?

The knowledge about inequality in SDP structures matters for the provision of equal opportunities and inclusive policies and practices in a context marked by scarce resources for development (aid) needs, limited social projects, and high competitiveness for scarce resources among SDP organizations (Kidd, 2011; Lindsey & Banda, 2011; Millington & Kidd, 2019; Rossi & Jeanes, 2018).

Revealing the unbalanced relations between different types of stakeholders and finding those who occupy more prominent positions in the SDP field have a twofold purpose. First, it is useful for disclosing power abuse. Second, it is also needed for locating the agencies, which have the potential to become leaders. After the closure of the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace in 2017, there is a certain vacuum in the leadership, while the SDP field needs a transnational leader that would be able to “pull together multifarious stakeholders, help establish a clear vision for the sector, and develop unifying strategies, partnerships, and programs” (Giulianotti et al., 2019, p. 421).

However, the knowledge about the ways how to advance equality of opportunities of SDP stakeholders is not sufficiently developed. Considering the importance of equal opportunities for SDP stakeholders, this doctoral dissertation explores how equality of opportunities could be advanced, which is reflected in the following research question:

**RQ 2.** How can equality of opportunities for the stakeholders of the Sport for Development and Peace field be advanced?

Disclosing inequality in the global SDP field, overcoming the limitations of qualitative methods, and creating a large-scale quantitative evidence base need a detailed map of SDP stakeholders, which has not yet been elaborated, and the SDP field is still characterized as “under-documented” (Lindsey et al., 2017, p. 27). Already in 2011, scholars urge “to count, describe and categorise” the great variety of SDP practices before making “any definitive statements about ‘SDP’” (Donnelly et al., 2011, p. 593). Similarly, Kidd (2011) points at “an urgent need for a more careful mapping of SDP than has previously been possible” (p. 604).

In particular, there is a lack of large-scale quantitative descriptions of SDP stakeholders around the globe, accounting for the diversity of agencies in the field and including an analysis of their position within the international field (relations with other agencies and their prominence). Instead, the SDP structure has been researched from the qualitative perspective, and different types of stakeholders and their relations have been revealed and classified (Bardocz-Bencsik & Doczi, 2019; Giulianotti, 2011a, 2011b, 2019; Giulianotti et al., 2016; Levermore & Beacom, 2009; Lindsey et al., 2020; Straume, 2019). Only SDP organizations involved in grassroots activities (Svensson & Woods, 2017) and non-governmental organizations in the SDP field (Suzuki, 2019) have received some quantitative evaluations. Such specific selection has left out of the focus other agencies that are recognized as SDP stakeholders and support practices by financial or material resources, but do not necessarily implement on-ground projects themselves, for example, sports federations, national institutions, and intergovernmental organizations (Giulianotti, 2011b). Importantly, in the absence of a detailed global map of SDP, the claims about the prominence and leadership of particular organizations have a weak

empirical base, and therefore it is hard to evaluate who might be better positioned for leadership in the field.

Despite the significant increase in the amount of SDP research during the last two decades (Schulenkorf et al., 2016), the scholarship was unable to find a solution for the large-scale mapping of the global SDP field. The lack of a comprehensive description of the global SDP field might be related to the methodological difficulties in dealing with the complexity of the SDP field, characterized by the great diversity of agencies, practices, and relations (Bardocz-Bencsik & Doczi, 2019; Lindsey et al., 2017). Revealing global patterns in the distribution of SDP stakeholders and practices and the multitude of possible connections between them would need large-scale quantitative data, and their collection through non-automatized methods would need substantial human resources. Moreover, in the context of the research scarcity on SDP mapping and the absence of established and tested theoretical or methodological solutions, the research has to be exploratory, which increases the difficulty of the undertaking.

While a robust body of SDP scholarship has emerged in the last two decades, it has not yet relied on mediated communication as a proxy for the mapping and understanding of the composition and relations of the global SDP field. Neither has it incorporated digital methods for getting hard-to-access information and big data of the field's structure. Nevertheless, the methodological solutions relying on mediated communication and digital methods have been fruitfully applied for social, media, and communication research, including the analysis of complex inter-organizational relations in the field of human development (e.g., Ackland, 2013; Foucault Welles & González-Bailón, 2020; Helles, 2020; Shumate, 2012; Shumate & Dewitt, 2008).

Modern societies are in part reflected and defined by communication, and this aspect has been highlighted in several theoretical perspectives. In Luhmann's (2013)



theory of society, a social system generates communication, and communication has been recognized as an operation of the social system. Communication has a fundamental role in establishing networks, which in their turn shape social systems (Castells, 2010; Fuchs, 2007; Van Dijk, 2012). In media-saturated societies, many of people's interactions leave digital trails, and new technologies facilitate the collection and analysis of digital trace data for advancing knowledge in sociology and humanities (Ackland, 2013; Foucault Welles & González-Bailón, 2020; Levenberg et al., 2018; Marres, 2017; Orton-Johnson & Prior, 2013).

In the great diversity of communication instances, mediated communication is an important component of modern social processes that are in part enabled by and intertwined with it, and therefore provides an insight into modern social life in media-saturated societies (Frandsen, 2020; Hepp, 2020). Media are no longer mainly theorized as content providers or instruments of symbolic (ideological, political) influence, but they are regarded as an important part of social processes in the digital age (González-Bailón, 2017; Hjarvard, 2013). Media have pervaded societies (at least of the global North) to the extent that their significance might be defined as “mediation of everything” (Livingstone, 2009, p. 2). In their turn, the crucial structural and power distribution elements of modern societies—media and social networks of face-to-face communication—are gradually “becoming a single reality” (Van Dijk, 2012, p. 20). In addition, mediated communication is highly relevant for understanding processes in sport, where it “permeates and stimulates changes at all levels” (Frandsen, 2020, Chapter 1).

Digital methods use online technologies and web data to perform social and cultural research that goes beyond studying virtual social relationships and structures and engages with broader aspects of contemporary social life (Rogers, 2015; Snee et al.,

2016).<sup>5</sup> Digital methods include both the relatively new “methods embedded in online devices” (Rogers, 2015, p. 1) and “traditional” methods with pre-digital history, which have been modified by digital technology or supported by digital trace data (Dawson, 2020). Many social processes addressed through digital methods might be studied with other “traditional” methods; however, digital methods enable the application of new approaches to existing research questions in social sciences, and in some cases, they facilitate exploration of previously methodologically inaccessible issues (Chykina & Crabtree, 2018; Snee et al., 2016).

Regardless of the constantly growing number of social research with digital tools and data, the potential of digital methods still has been barely harnessed by social sciences and there is a call to support the work in this area (Halfpenny & Proctor, 2015; Snee et al., 2016). The discovery of new applications of digital methods for social research is an important contribution to scholarship as society gets more instruments to understand the complexity of modern social processes.

The need to find methodological solutions for the mapping of the SDP field, which would permit to disclose unequal structures, and the potential of mediated communication and digital methods for that purpose condition the choice of the following research question of this doctoral project:

**RQ 3.** Are mediated communication and digital methods effective for the description of the global Sport for Development and Peace structure and for the advancement of knowledge leading to equality?

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<sup>5</sup> Some approaches to digital methods use not only web-based devices but also other computer-based digital technologies such as sensor-based and location technologies (Dawson, 2020). The use of such tools goes beyond the scope of this research, which focuses on online digital tools.

Furthermore, the analysis of the SDP structure is complicated by the lack of a detailed theoretical framework and methodology for discerning SDP boundaries, which are not easily distinguished within the larger field of sport (Giulianotti et al., 2016; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). In general, the SDP field is characterized as weakly conceptualized and undertheorized (Coalter, 2010; Schnitzer et al., 2013; Svensson & Levine, 2017). In particular, conceptual clarification is needed in the case of SDP boundaries, which is complicated by little elaboration of the distinguishing criteria. The need for conceptual clarity indicated the relevance of the next research question:

**RQ 4.** Can a conceptual framework and model for the definition of the boundaries of the Sport for Development and Peace field be elaborated to create a methodological ground for future lines of research?

### **1.3. Research objectives**

The doctoral project aims to answer four research questions, already exposed in the theoretical context in the previous chapter. For answering these questions, some research objectives were elaborated. The connections between the research gaps, questions, objectives, and publications are exposed in Table 1.

**Table 1***The research questions and objectives in the context of research gaps and publications*

N	Research gaps	Research Questions	Objectives	Publications
1	<p>Lack of the theoretical knowledge of the inequalities in the structure of the global SDP field, accounting for the organizational diversity and geopolitical location; based on large-scale and quantitative empirical evidence; and including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quantitative description of the multiplex composition of the SDP field, revealing the distribution of different types of stakeholders, not merely SDP implementing agencies;</li> <li>- The patterns of connections between varied types of stakeholders;</li> <li>- The prominence of stakeholders within the field, underpinned by quantitative evidence.</li> </ul>	To what extent is inequality present in the structure of organizations and practices of the global SDP field in terms of organizational diversity and geopolitical location?	<p>1.1. To reveal to what extent inequality is present in the distribution of varied types of SDP stakeholders and practices and their geopolitical location.</p> <p>1.2. To reveal to what extent inequality is present in relations (connections) of varied practices and stakeholders, differing by organizational type and geopolitical location.</p> <p>1.3. To reveal to what extent the prominence (leadership, salience) of SDP practices and stakeholders differs in terms of their type and geopolitical location.</p>	<p>1 (p. 71)</p> <p>2 (p. 96)</p>
2	Shortage of research-based elaborations about the ways how to advance equality of opportunities of SDP stakeholders.	How can equality of opportunities for the stakeholders of the SDP field be advanced?	2. To reveal how equality of opportunities for the stakeholders of the SDP field could be advanced.	<p>1 (p. 71)</p> <p>2 (p. 96)</p>

<p>3 Lack of elaborated methodology in SDP studies for the large-scale quantitative descriptions of the SDP field that would include diverse types of stakeholders and relations among them.</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about possible applications of mediated communication and digital methods for the description of the global SDP structure and for the advancement of the knowledge leading to equality.</p>	<p>Are mediated communication and digital methods effective for the description of the global SDP structure and for the advancement of knowledge leading to equality?</p>	<p>3.1. To reveal mediated communication and digital methods that can serve for the description of the global SDP field.</p> <p>3.2. To evaluate the effectiveness of mediated communication and digital methods for the description of the global SDP structure and for the advancement of knowledge leading to equality.</p>	<p>1 (p. 71)</p> <p>2 (p. 96)</p>
<p>4 Lack of detailed theoretical and methodological frameworks for distinguishing the boundaries of SDP.</p>	<p>Can a conceptual framework and model for the definition of the boundaries of the SDP field be elaborated to create a methodological ground for future lines of research?</p>	<p>4. To elaborate a model and conceptual framework for the definition of the boundaries of the SDP field, which could serve as a methodological ground for future lines of research.</p>	<p>3 (p. 112)</p>

## **2. Research design, theoretical frameworks, and methodological choices**

This chapter aims at introducing general methodological choices (Section 2.1), highlighting the design of the research, and providing a resume of each research stage and corresponding publications, focusing on the theoretical frameworks, methods, and contributions (Section 2.2). The review of the results and conclusions are provided further on in Chapter 3.

### **2.1. Exploratory and interdisciplinary research stance**

The research is exploratory and interdisciplinary. Being exploratory, it engages with the issues that have been scarcely studied and do not have ready methodological solutions (Phillips & Pugh, 2010). This is a kind of research that needs “to examine what theories and concepts are appropriate, developing new ones if necessary, and whether existing methodologies can be used” (Phillips & Pugh, 2010, p. 59).

Interdisciplinarity is present in two ways. First, the SDP research field is “strongly interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, with significant contributions from sociology, anthropology, management studies, psychology, political science, social policy, pedagogy, criminology and youth studies, and other disciplinary domains” (Giulianotti et al., 2019, p. 414). This doctoral project combines interdisciplinary SDP research with the SDP knowledge from specific disciplines such as sociology, management studies, political science, and social policy. Second, this research goes beyond the study of inequality in the structure of the global SDP field and engages with exploring the utility of mediated communication and digital methods for mapping SDP structure and relations. Therefore, SDP theory is complemented by media and communication studies, the

literature from the theoretical domains that review digital methods, e.g., “web social science” (Ackland, 2013), “digital sociology” (Marres, 2017; Orton-Johnson & Prior, 2013), and the specific methodological literature on digital methods (Rogers, 2015).

## 2.2. Summary of research stages

The research has been carried out in three stages. Each stage has specific theoretical framing and methodology. The results of each stage are reflected in a corresponding publication (Table 2).

Table 2

*The correspondence between the research stages and publications*

Stage	Title of publication and reference	Location of publications
1. Mapping the SDP field and revealing inequality in its structure	Communication network analysis to advance mapping “sport for development and peace” complexity: Cohesion and leadership (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021)	Appendix A (p. 71)
2. Extending results on structural prominence	“Sport for Development and Peace” before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: Using internet search data for monitoring and explaining issue salience (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press)	Appendix B (p. 96)
3. A model for the definition of SDP boundaries	A conceptual framework for the definition of the “Sport for Development and Peace” field and the location of best practices (Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, 2020)	Appendix C (p. 112)

### 2.2.1. Stage 1: Mapping the SDP field and revealing inequality in its structure

**General description.** The first stage was dedicated to mapping the variety of SDP stakeholders and relations between them. Also, the research explored the utility of communication network data and hyperlink network analysis in mapping SDP.

**Theoretical framework.** The general theoretical background was built on the theory of complex systems and network society. More specific knowledge was incorporated from the theoretical elaborations about communication networks and the social significance of hyperlinks.

**Methods.** The principal method was hyperlink network analysis, which is the combination of the methodological procedures of social network analysis and the web data of hyperlink networks. The social network analysis incorporated quantitative analysis with statistical measures and qualitative analysis of the visualized network. Indexing of web profiles, web crawling, and classification of organizations were performed to obtain the data. The web crawling was performed to reveal a hyperlink network between the websites (pages), representing the SDP stakeholders online.

**Contributions.** The research provides a methodology to differentiate SDP-relevant organizations and practices, proposing an original classification of SDP stakeholders. Importantly, the research extends the description of the SDP field by large-scale quantitative mapping of diverse types of SDP stakeholders, which includes both the distribution of varied types of stakeholders and relations between them. The results reveal several patterns in the relations of SDP stakeholders. The inequalities in the SDP composition and relations are disclosed in the next aspects: the dominance of the global North in composition and connections, variation in the quantity and quality of connections depending on the type of stakeholders and their status. Various types of



leaders have been described and prominent agencies revealed. Additionally, the low cohesion level of the field has got its first empirically supported evaluation, which provides an important characteristic of the relations in SDP and reveals difficulties in establishing relations in the SDP field. The research reveals the usefulness of hyperlink network analysis for depicting the structure of SDP. The methodological part of the study fruitfully introduces hyperlink network analysis to the domain of SDP.

### **2.2.2. Stage 2: Extending results on structural prominence**

**General description.** The research engaged with the prominence (issue salience) of SDP practices within the SDP field and in the broader field of sport. Additionally, the drivers of unequal salience were discussed. The study relied on the data of specific mediated communication, happening between human beings and artificial intelligence (search engine machines). The results relied on web search engine data, and through the data extraction, analysis, and representation a specific digital method was applied.

**Theoretical framework.** The theoretical part was heavily based on SDP literature and incorporated theoretical revisions of the issue salience concept and its digital measures, mostly coming from political science scholarship.

**Methods.** The research relied on a specific type of digital trace data, web search engine data. The data was collected and analyzed from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives. Comparative analysis of the web search engine data was complemented by thematic analysis.

**Contributions.** The results of the research reveal the significance of geographic and social environment for the prominence in the structure of SDP. Also, it clarifies the position of SDP in relation to the broader sports sector. The salience level of SDP gets

characterized as stable and being able to adapt to changing environments. The study underlines the greater salience of some of the concepts, language contexts, geographic locations, and practices. Furthermore, the drivers of SDP salience are characterized and compared to the drivers of broader sport and another sports subfield of “development of sport.”

The research states the usefulness of the web search engine data for estimating and explaining the salience of varied SDP practices. Also, the use of digital trace data in sports research has been amplified.

### **2.2.3. Stage 3: A model for the definition of SDP boundaries**

**General description.** The third stage consisted of the theoretical analysis of the SDP field’s boundaries and the variety of SDP practices. The study critically analyzed research, provided research synthesis, tried to resolve the conflict in the literature about boundaries definition, and proposed theoretical and methodological solutions.

**Theoretical framework.** The analysis was based on SDP research, including interdisciplinary SDP publications and domain-specific publications in sociology, management studies, political science, and social policy.

**Methods.** The research relied on the theoretical research procedures of analysis, synthesis, comparison, and modelling.

**Contributions.** The study adds to the clarification of the criteria of distinguishing SDP boundaries and classifying stakeholders and practices by elaborating an original set of criteria. The principal theoretical contribution of this stage is proposing a model for the definition of the boundaries of the SDP field, differentiating relevant stakeholders and practices, and locating best practices. The novelty and advantage of the framework are in

(1) highlighting various approaches for the specification of SDP boundaries, which are flexible enough to fit various research agendas; (2) providing directions for locating best practices and focusing on the characteristics of SDP practices that let them be an efficient tool in development and peacebuilding; and (3) establishing relations between the criteria for SDP definition and mapping the criteria and relations on a schema. The model and conceptual framework provide a methodological ground for future research of SDP structure.

### **3. Results review and conclusions**

#### **3.1. Inequalities in the structure of the SDP field**

This chapter is dedicated to answering the research question about the extent to which inequality is present in the structure of organizations and practices of the global SDP field in terms of organizational diversity and geopolitical location.

##### **3.1.1. Distributions of stakeholders and practices**

The section reviews the results of the publication about the SDP mapping (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) (Appendix A), which corresponds to the research objective to reveal to what extent inequality is present in the distribution of varied types of SDP stakeholders and practices and their geopolitical location.

The results of the SDP structure mapping (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) confirmed the complex composition of the SDP field, consisting of a great diversity of stakeholder types from varied parts of the world (Giulianotti, 2011b, 2019; Giulianotti et al., 2016; Straume, 2019). In addition to the previous research describing the stakeholders by the type of their organization (e.g., governmental and intergovernmental agencies, NGOs, private companies, and social movements), the social sector they belong to (public, private, and civil society), the policies they are associated with (e.g., neoliberal), and geopolitical location (the global South/North) (Giulianotti, 2011b, 2019; Straume, 2019), the current study provided evidence about the SDP stakeholders differing by their core organizational purpose in relation to SDP (SDP-specialized organizations and the agencies with other primary activities, including professional sport and non-sporting activities) and variance of their primary task (mission) in relation to the practice of

interventions (the stakeholders primarily dedicated to the implementation of on-ground projects and stakeholders with other tasks, e.g., financing and organizing) (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

The original approach permitted to distinguish 9 types of stakeholders: SDP implementing agencies, SDP support agencies, development interventions, sports practice, sport governing bodies, governing and influential organizations, academic institutions, support of sport and development, and hybrid organizations (combining several types) (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). The typology was supplemented by detecting the main field of activities: SDP-specialized, sports, and non-sporting (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). The new classification has advantages for the large-scale SDP mapping as it reflects the form of participation and the degree of involvement in SDP by ranging stakeholders according to their specialization in SDP or absence of such and their relation to the practice of on-ground delivery of SDP projects.

The results of the SDP structure mapping showed that more than half of stakeholders are not entirely dedicated to SDP and have other principal activities: 57% (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). Such distribution suggests that in the quantitative aspect SDP-specialized agencies are not the most important force in the field. While the qualitative aspect should be also considered, it might be argued that there was a significant reliance of the SDP field on the agencies with primary sports (23%) and non-sporting (43%) purposes (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). Additionally, since the majority of stakeholders were not specialized in SDP, the voices of “SDP professionals” may be subjugated. It creates a dangerous situation, when diverse non-SDP interests such as commercial (corporate image as socially responsible) and political (soft power) may prevail over the interests in the effective delivery of SDP (cf. Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010).

Unequal distributions were evident in the case of geopolitical characteristics. The stakeholders with origins in the global North had a dominant position, constituting 71 % of all stakeholders (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). Northern America (21%), Western Europe (18%), and Northern Europe (17%) were the most represented regions (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). Thus, the mainstream global SDP field is substantially northern-led.

The description of the SDP field revealed that practice-oriented organizations dominated the field (57%) (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). These were SDP implementing agencies (36%), development interventions (14%), and sports practice (7%). The distribution of practice-oriented agencies was unbalanced between the global North and the global South. In the global North, they even did not arrive to consist half of the organizations (48%), and in the global South, they were the majority (79%) (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). Such distribution suggests that practice-oriented organizations in the SDP field tend to have origins in the global South and that most interventions take place in the global South, while the global North is characterized by the role of “support” and “assistance.”

### **3.1.2. Connection patterns**

The section reviews the results of the publication about the SDP mapping (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) (Appendix A), which corresponds to the research objective to reveal to what extent inequality is present in relations (connections) of varied practices and stakeholders, differing by organizational type and geopolitical location.

The mapping of the SDP structure through the online communication network analysis (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) helped to reveal several patterns in the relations of SDP stakeholders (N = 520) in terms of organizational diversity and geopolitical location:

First, the stakeholders of the global North and the global South had different preferences in their in-group and out-group connections. The global North stakeholders tended to link to each other rather than to the stakeholders of the global South. The global South stakeholders tended to link to the global North stakeholders rather than to the other representatives of the global South. While the global North was 2,5 times bigger by the number of stakeholders than the global South (n = 371 vs. n = 149), there were more links from the global South to the global North (n = 223) than from the global North to the global South (n = 160). Thus, the links from the global South to the global North did not get reciprocated often. Furthermore, the in-group connections of the global South were extremely scarce (n = 23) compared to the connections between the global North stakeholders (n = 1873). The cohesion of the global South subfield was much lower than the cohesion of the global North subfield: 0.001 vs. 0.014, where the numbers reflect the density of connections the field, and 0.001 means that less than 1% of all possible connections were realized (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

Second, there were patterns in the connections of SDP implementing agencies, i.e., the SDP-specialized agencies with the main purpose to deliver on-ground projects. SDP implementing agencies preferred to place links to non-sporting governing and influential organizations rather than to connect among themselves (108 vs. 84 registered links). In general, governing and influential organizations had more links from SDP implementing agencies than any other type of stakeholders (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

Third, the network connections analysis revealed low reciprocity from non-sporting governing and influential organizations to SDP implementing agencies. The links of SDP implementing agencies to non-sporting governing and influential organizations were rarely reciprocated by these non-sporting organizations. The number of links from the “powerful” organizations to SDP implementing agencies was extremely low (7 links) (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

Fourth, the patterns in the connection of SDP implementing agencies showed that these agencies were not usually the organizations acknowledged by many others, but they tended to be the agencies that connected the network by placing links to others. SDP implementing agencies were referring 1,7 times more often to other types of stakeholders than getting links from them (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

Thus, the pertinence to the global North or the global South is an important characteristic for the patterns of connections distribution. The stakeholders from the global South appear in the underprivileged position when their links to the global North do not get reciprocated. The scarce references from the global North along with the little density of in-group connections (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) undermines the potential of the global South to be visible online because the quantity and quality of hyperlinks of an organizational website allow being discovered by others (Ackland, 2013; Shumate & Lipp, 2008). Partially, the shortage of links could be attributed to the digital gap (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). However, the global South stakeholders were able to refer to the global North, and other explanations should be considered, especially related to the previously discussed patterns in distributions and relations. Importantly, the global South is dominated by practice-oriented agencies, including SDP implementing agencies. In accordance with the revealed patterns of relations, SDP implementing agencies do not tend to refer to other agencies of their group (type) but



prefer to “acknowledge” the “powerful” organizations (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

SDP implementing agencies are in a similar to the global South stakeholders underprivileged position, according to the next highlighted results: on the one hand, the number of references they placed to other stakeholders was highly unbalanced with the number of the reciprocated references; on the other hand, they did not tend to place in-group links (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). Considering the already mentioned high importance of links for online prominence, SDP implementing agencies get less visibility than they could if the discussed links would be established.

### **3.1.3. Prominence**

The section reviews the results of the publications about the SDP mapping and SDP salience (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021; Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press) (Appendixes A and B), which correspond to the research objective to reveal to what extent the prominence (leadership, salience) of SDP practices and stakeholders differs in terms of their type and geopolitical location.

The analysis of the SDP hyperlink network revealed a highly unequal distribution of connections, with some agencies enjoying a disproportionately high number of links and many others having very few or no links (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). Some stakeholders had the number of references from others up to 28 times higher than the average when almost half of the stakeholders (49%) did not have any references from other organizations in the field (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

The analysis of the SDP network revealed that there were many agencies ( $n = 170$ , 33%) that were not connected to any other stakeholder or were a part of a small group

with some connections between the members but without connections to the large SDP network that had the majority of stakeholders and no isolated agencies (n = 350, 67%) (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). The agencies disconnected from the majority network (n = 170, 33%) were mostly practice-oriented agencies (69% out of 170) such as SDP implementing agencies (38%), sports practice (15%), and development interventions (16%). The disconnected practice-oriented agencies constituted 40 % of all practice-oriented agencies in the SDP network. Thus, among the practice-oriented agencies, there were a strong disposition to have few connections. Importantly, the isolated position was not explicitly related to the geopolitical location as 58% of these disconnected stakeholders proceeded from the global North (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

The SDP mapping showed (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) that the leaders of the SDP field were situated in the larger component of the SDP network, where the stakeholders constituted an interconnected whole. The analysis revealed two types of prominence (leadership) in the field: (a) the stakeholders that were acknowledged by many others and (b) the stakeholders that acknowledged many others. Correspondingly, they were defined as “authorities,” i.e., leading by the number of other stakeholders that reference them, and “connecting leaders,” i.e., leading in placing many links to others, and therefore connecting the agencies in the SDP field (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

In the study (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021), some types of organizations showed the potential for a certain type of leadership. SDP implementing agencies were not usually the leaders acknowledged by many others, but they showed a greater capacity for being connecting leaders. In its turn, the “authorities” of the SDP field tended to proceed from the groups of non-sporting governing and influential organizations and academic institutions. Importantly, the global North organizations were the “authority”

leaders among the SDP-specialized agencies. Specifically, the global North agencies constituted the top 10 “authorities” for the subgroup of SDP-specialized agencies (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

Furthermore, during the analysis (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) a subgroup of stakeholders that were acknowledged more often than average (more links from others than average rate) was discerned. In this prominent group, the organizations from the non-sporting subfield (stakeholders with primary non-sporting activities) prevailed (65%), while SDP-specialized agencies were underrepresented (17%), which marks a substantial inequality in the field. Additionally, a subgroup of stakeholders that placed more links to others than average was discerned. The non-sporting organizations were the majority in this group as well. Thus, non-sporting agencies demonstrated a greater capacity for “authoritative” and “cohesive” types of leadership in the SDP field. In this case, the pertinence to the global North or the global South was an important characteristic for explaining leadership patterns because the stakeholders from the global North dominated in all leadership subgroups (constituting from 83.5 to 93% of these subgroups) (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

The study (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) also provided information on particular leaders of the field, i.e., the most prominent organizations. The UN showed the highest results in both types of leadership measures, i.e., connecting and authoritative, which once more underlined the prominence of non-sporting agencies in the SDP field. Among the SDP-specialized agencies, Streetfootballworld stood out as a cohesive leader, getting the same score as the UN (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

Further research of SDP prominence in this doctoral project focused on the prominence of SDP in people’s minds, or attention distribution in online searches (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press). The study suggested shifting the researchers’

attention from the significance of the global North/South in general to the heterogeneous character of these geopolitical formations and the role of particular countries and language contexts within them. Further analysis focused on people's interests for SDP around the globe, with a particular focus on Spain, France, the UK, and Russia, and four language contexts such as the Spanish, French, English, and Russian language contexts (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press).

The research (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press) revealed some patterns in the distribution of human attention:

First, SDP was more salient in some language contexts than others. English language context was outstanding by the level of attention to SDP if compared to the Spanish, French, and Russian language contexts. Moreover, SDP became salient some years earlier in the English language context than in other contexts (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press).

Second, within some countries, SDP was more popular than within others. Countries differed by the share of attention to SDP among the overall attention to all the other issues within these countries. For example, in the English language context, Australia, India, Indonesia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America got salient by the interest to SDP within these countries. On contrary, in France and Russia, in their respective languages, SDP did not have any significant level of interest (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press). Thus, some countries within the global North (e.g., Australia, the UK, and the USA) as well as some countries within the global South (e.g., India and Indonesia) were standing out by their interest in SDP in the English language context, while other countries in their language contexts did not show a significant level of interest (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press).

Also, the salience of SDP varied, when compared to the “development of sport” that is a sports subsector focused on “sport for sport’s sake” and competing with the SDP field. SDP was outranked by the development of sport in all language contexts and studied countries (France, the UK, Russia, Spain). When compared to the development of sport, SDP had especially low salience in France and Russia (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press).

Furthermore, the salience of specific SDP terms differed across countries. For example, the term “development through sport” was more prominent in Australia, “sport for social change”—in the UK, “sport for peace”—in Indonesia, and “sport for development”—in the UK, India, and the USA (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press).

Overall, the analysis of the SDP network (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) revealed a highly unequal distribution of connections (hyperlinks). There were many agencies isolated from the bigger interconnected network of stakeholders. The analysis did not find indications that would point at the role of geopolitical forces on the isolation of the stakeholders. However, the research did reveal that the type of organization had more explaining potential in this case. In particular, the agencies disconnected from the larger interconnected network of stakeholders were mostly practice-oriented stakeholders. On contrary, the geopolitical location was an important characteristic for explaining leadership patterns; and the northern-led character of the SDP field got some additional evidence (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

Furthermore, different types of organizations demonstrated varying capacities for being “authorities” or connecting leaders in the field (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). Non-sporting organizations in general and the UN in particular stood out in both types of leadership characteristics (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

The research of SDP salience (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press) revealed that the global South was underrepresented in the English language context, which is the most important in the prominence of SDP, if compared to the Spanish, French, and Russian language contexts. The salience of SDP in general and of specific terms varied across countries, with some countries having a higher interest in SDP and particular terms within their own countries than other countries. In each language and country context, SDP was outranked by the development of sport (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press).

#### **3.1.4. Limitations**

The research results are limited by the focus on particular language contexts and the single SDP platform (the International Platform on Sport and Development). Further research should incorporate other languages to the study and find ways how to add to the analysis other SDP networks such as Beyond Sport Network ([www.beyondsport.org/Network](http://www.beyondsport.org/Network)), Laureus Sport for Good ([www.laureus.com/sport-for-good](http://www.laureus.com/sport-for-good)), Sport for Social Change Networks in Brazil and South Africa ([rems.org.br](http://rems.org.br), [www.sscn.co.za](http://www.sscn.co.za)), and Streetfootballworld network ([www.streetfootballworld.org](http://www.streetfootballworld.org)).

Also, the measure of SDP prominence relying on the distribution of people's attention is just one indicator out of many others that must be considered to understand a country's position in the SDP field, for example, the number and kinds of SDP-specialized agencies, donors, and national and international programs in SDP.

### **3.2. Equality of opportunities**

This chapter aims at answering the research question about the ways to advance the equality of opportunities for the stakeholders of the SDP field, and it reviews the results of the publications about SDP mapping and SDP salience (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021; Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, in press) (Appendices A and B), which correspond to the research objective to reveal how equality of opportunities for the stakeholders of the SDP field could be advanced.

An analysis of the possibilities to advance the equality of opportunities for the stakeholders of the SDP field was carried out in the research paper about the communication network analysis and mapping SDP complexity (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). Relying on the network theory, the discussion focused on the consequences of inequality in SDP networks, urging about the further growing gap between the agencies and exposing the danger for SDP diversity if the same agencies dominate the field. To minimize the negative consequences, the need to increase participation in online SDP networks was underlined. The analysis proposed to connect more organizations to the International Platform on Sport and Development ([sportanddev.org](http://sportanddev.org)), which would supposedly increase pressure on other disconnected agencies, and they would join the network. However, the analysis also suggested that just initial connecting is not enough because if the newly connected agencies would not contribute to the network, they would be at high risk to disconnect again. Thus, the importance of active participation was underlined. Furthermore, the analysis proposed supporting the intermediaries—the organizations serving as a meeting point and playing a cohesive role—and encouraging their appearance in the global South as well as considering the potential of universities in the role of the SDP intermediaries (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

In general, the global South had a weaker position in the SDP field than the global North as the global South stakeholders were less numerous and had fewer connections (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). As well, the global South was underrepresented in the English language context of the SDP field (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press). The outstanding importance of the English language context in the salience of SDP (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press) might be a reason for less numerous and less connected participation of the global South in the SDP field. The dominant position of the English language in the SDP field and the salience of English-speaking countries create inequality of opportunities for those who cannot communicate in English. Those SDP agencies who can afford communication in English appear to have better opportunities to connect to the mainstream SDP field. For example, just 1% of the agencies connected to the SDP network had origins in the East Asia region (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021), and South Korea, a country from this region, did not get salient in the study of the English language context of the SDP salience (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press). However, recent research described the prominence of SDP in South Korea and pointed at “the process of a paradigm shift from ‘development *of* sport’ to ‘development *through* sport’” in this country (Ha et al., 2015, p. 1263). Thus, overcoming language barriers is an important element of the SDP network building, SDP salience, and a more balanced distribution of connections in the SDP field.

Furthermore, the inequality of opportunities might be addressed relying on the data about the varying prominence of SDP across countries and the drivers of attention to SDP from the research of SDP salience (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press). The research suggested that the drivers of attention to SDP differ from those of sport and development of sport. The themes of “media” and “shopping” drove attention to sport at a large extent, but they were not characteristic of the attention to SDP and development



of sport, which was “actor-driven.” In the case of SDP, the most prominent actors were the agencies of the UN system and the youth. The role of the UN was exemplary in this case, which promoted the “International Day of Sport for Development and Peace” that was among the principal drivers of attention to SDP (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press).

Thus, the strategies to increase the salience of SDP in general and the most underprivileged agencies in particular should pay attention to non-sporting agencies in addition to the obvious role of SDP-specialized agencies in the promotion of SDP. In particular, the strategies should consider the potential of the organizations related to youth participation, as the youth is the principal target group of SDP interventions (Collison et al., 2019).

Also, innovative solutions to increase the prominence of SDP agencies and practices should be searched in the domain of media-driven attention, which serves for the salience of the larger field of sport. The scholarship does not provide any evidence why SDP should not search for media attention and promote its activities through the media. Moreover, it would be a logical step in a mediatized society. In general, the media aspect of SDP lacks a vast body of knowledge. Nevertheless, some studies have already pointed at the significance of varied media in SDP practice (e.g., Harrison & Boehmer, 2019; Hayhurst et al., 2011; Svensson et al., 2015; Wilson & Hayhurst, 2009)

Other opportunities to support equality in the SDP field are related to the SDP-specialized agencies, which are not the majority among the SDP stakeholders (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). In the situation when SDP-specialized agencies are less numerous, it is important to find ways how to protect their interests as they are the agencies of SDP delivery. In particular, the evidenced “competing values” and

“different approaches” between SDP NGOs and their more powerful partners from high-performance sport (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010, p. 75) need the attention of scholars.

A potential aid may come from professional unions that once created would defend the needs of SDP and oppose the commercial and political interests that intervene with the aims of SDP. However, the research of the SDP network revealed the low cohesion between the practice-oriented organizations (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021), and the creation of professional unions would need to overcome high competition in the SDP field between the delivery organizations (NPOs and NGOs) characterized by limited resources and capacity. Nevertheless, the need to protect professional interests and oppose to pressures of “donors” and powerful institutions might be a good reason for overcoming the existing difficulties in connecting.

Furthermore, SDP policies and programs can address such unbalanced structures as the tendency of the practice-oriented (delivery) agencies to be placed in the global South and the tendency of the agencies of governance and support (delivery assistance) to be placed in the global North (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). However, the existence of such role distribution does not mean that the possibilities of the global South and the global North should be limited to these roles. The global North is not only a “donor,” but it already has SDP interventions on its ground (Coalter, 2013; Giles et al., 2019; Giulianotti, 2019); and the number of SDP projects in high-income and middle-income countries of the global North may increase as well. Furthermore, there is evidence of the southern-led SDP initiatives and organizations (Darnell et al., 2019; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012); and the global South might continue to develop the capacity to lead independent SDP projects.

Thus, the theoretical analysis and empirical evidence point to some strategies, which need consideration and development in order to support the equality of opportunities in the SDP field.

### **3.3. Mediated communication and digital methods**

This chapter is dedicated to answering the research question if mediated communication and digital methods are effective for the description of the global SDP structure and for the advancement of knowledge leading to equality.

#### **3.3.1. Hyperlink networks and web search engine data**

The section provides the review of results, which correspond to the research objective to reveal mediated communication and digital methods that can serve for the description of the global SDP field. It incorporates the results of the publications about the SDP mapping and SDP salience (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021; Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, in press) (Appendixes A and B).

A broad understanding of digital methods includes a vast array of computer-based digital technologies, including online, sensor-based, and location technologies, used to collect and analyze data (Dawson, 2020). However, this doctoral project focused on a narrow approach to the definition of digital methods, which limits the area of interest to the use of web-based technologies and web data to perform social and cultural research (Rogers, 2015; Snee et al., 2016). Importantly, the research with digital methods is not entirely focused on the study of virtual reality but also admits the interrelated nature of online and offline phenomena in the modern world and therefore engages with broader aspects of contemporary social life (Rogers, 2015; Snee et al., 2016).

The search of relevant methods for the description and analysis of SDP included both the methods and data that did not exist before the invention of the Internet (e.g., web search engine indexes) and the methods that incorporate a significant part of procedures from “traditional” offline methods with long research history while relying on online data (e.g., hyperlink network analysis incorporating social network analysis). In general, to advance knowledge in humanities and social sciences a great variety of methods and data were applied, including content analysis of archived websites; social network analysis of hyperlink networks; web search engine data and created on its bases search indexes or content analysis of displayed search results; Wikipedia data and cross-cultural comparison (Rogers, 2015).

On the one hand, digital methods rely on the web technologies existing for a wide variety of users, for example, Google Trends service that provides data on users’ web searches and is widely used for non-scientific purposes, e.g., digital marketing. On the other hand, specific scientific software has been created to leverage digital data for research purposes. For example, the web crawler Hyphe that is created for social scientists to harvest the hyperlinks ([hyphe.medialab.sciences-po.fr](http://hyphe.medialab.sciences-po.fr)) and SentiStrength that is a software for automatic sentiment analysis of social web texts (like tweets and messages on other social media and online forums, [sentistrength.wlv.ac.uk](http://sentistrength.wlv.ac.uk)).

Social research has already accumulated some evidence about the areas of application of specific digital methods. In particular, hyperlink network analysis was fruitfully applied to map complex inter-organizational relations in varied areas of human and social development, including networks of NGOs (Ackland & O’Neil, 2011; Pilny & Shumate, 2012; Shumate, 2012; Shumate & Dewitt, 2008; Shumate & Lipp, 2008). The successful application of hyperlink network analysis in the domains of human and social

development and for similar purposes of structure description determined the choice of the method for the study of SDP.

Furthermore, the extraction of the web search data and its representation as search indexes were used to study the prominence of particular sports issues and agencies such as cyclists, Olympic bidders, physical exercise, and particular athletes (Ding et al., 2020; Genoe et al., 2021; Stow & Bason, 2021; Xu et al., 2020). However, the use of web search data in sports has not been numerous, and it has focused on specific sports issues rather than human and social development matters. A piece of additional evidence on the usefulness of web search engine analytics for researching prominence of social issues has been provided by the political science research, where it has been applied under the conceptual frame of “issue salience” (Dennison, 2019; Helbling & Tresch, 2011; Jenke & Munger, 2019; Miller et al., 2017; Wlezien, 2005).

Thus, the research relied on two forms of web-mediated communication: hyperlinks of organizational websites and users’ inquiries in web search engines. Applying the terminology of Yus (2015), the first one can be classified as the “user-to-the collectivity-of-users” communication, and the second is the “user-to-system” communication in the part of an inquiry placing and the “system-to-user” communication when a search engine provides a list of results.

### **3.3.2. Evaluation**

The section provides an assessment of results, which correspond to the research objective to evaluate the effectiveness of mediated communication and digital methods for the description of the global SDP structure and for the advancement of knowledge leading to equality. It incorporates the results of the publications about the SDP mapping

and SDP salience (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021; Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, in press) (Appendixes A and B).

**Hyperlink network analysis.** The description and analysis of the inequalities in the structure of the SDP field (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) were based on mediated communication in the form of hyperlinks and hyperlink network analysis, grounded on social network analysis methodology and enhanced by graph visualization procedures facilitated by graph theory. Hyperlink data as a proxy for inter-organizational relations demonstrated an important advantage for the study of the global SDP field: it allowed the collection of large sets of data (big data) through automated procedures. This advantage made the study of transnational connections of SDP feasible with limited research resources. The data collection was significantly supported by the web crawler “Hyphe,” created for the social sciences research (as different to web crawling for commercial purposes) (Jacomy et al., 2016; Ooghe-Tabanou et al., 2018). Additionally, the network data visualization was facilitated by the software Gephi (Bastian et al., 2009).

The principal difficulty of the use of hyperlink network analysis was related to the need for theoretical framing of hyperlink data as a proxy for social relations. The literature review revealed (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) that there is no common way to understand the social meaning of hyperlinks (De Maeyer, 2013). For the SDP field mapping, hyperlinks of organizational websites are best understood as representational communication (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021), similarly to the interpretation of hyperlinking between varied development stakeholders, including NGOs and corporations (Shumate, 2012; Shumate & Lipp, 2008; Shumate & O’Connor, 2010). Representational communication states affiliation and appears when social actors communicate their affiliation, or acknowledgement, to the third party or the public in general (Shumate, 2012; Shumate & Contractor, 2014; Shumate & O’Connor, 2010;

Shumate et al., 2017). Such interpretation fits well the relationships between organizations in general and SDP stakeholders in particular because hyperlinks between them do not always mean direct contacts, cooperation, or flow of information.

Thus, hyperlinks and connected by them web pages are communication networks, where nodes are the web pages of SDP stakeholders and hyperlinks are proxies for representational relations (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021). Furthermore, the understanding of the connections as a network allows applying relevant theoretical perspectives for the interpretation of the network structure such as network society theory and theoretical perspective of communication networks (e.g., Castells, 2010; Monge & Contractor, 2003; Shumate et al., 2017; Van Dijk, 2012). Also, the study of hyperlink networks as a proxy for inter-organizational relations may rely on the social network analysis as a set of methodological tools with a focus on relationships among and between social agencies, including visual and statistical analysis (e.g., Freeman, 2004; Knoke & Yang, 2020).

In summary, the reliance on mediated communication in the form of a hyperlink inter-organizational network interpreted through the lens of representational communication approach is a useful methodological solution for mapping the SDP field and revealing inequality in its structure. The incorporation of the theoretical perspective of communication networks and network society theory facilitates the interpretation of the network analysis results. The elaborated theoretical and methodological perspectives are useful for depicting the global structure of the SDP field, the network of relations between the stakeholders and practices, and revealing inequalities in the SDP network. Also, considering the multitude of achieved results (see Sections 3.1 and 3.2), hyperlink network analysis should be recommended as a theoretical-analytical solution for mapping the global SDP field.

**Web search engine index.** The analysis of SDP prominence (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press) was based on the web search engine data, in particular, the data of Google search engine provided to the public through the Google Trends service ([trends.google.com](https://trends.google.com)). Search engine data are a manifestation of digital trace data defined as observations of people's digital behaviour, i.e., publicly available or confidential digital trails left after the people's use of digital technologies, for example, web browser history, web searches, social media posts and "likes," and records of geographic locations (Menchen-Trevino, 2013, 2020).

Web search engine data was an effective source of data for the study of SDP because it allowed quick capture of existing and emerging trends in the global SDP field (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press), which worldwide surveillance through "traditional" systems would be expensive and time-consuming. The advantages of web search data for the study of SDP complement the already acknowledged benefits of this type of big data for varied social inquiries (e.g., Ding et al., 2020).

The principal difficulty in the use of web search engine data for SDP research is similar to hyperlink network analysis and related to the need to have a relevant theoretical framework. The applications of the web search engine data for social research of sport have been scarce (Ding et al., 2020; Genoe et al., 2021; Stow & Bason, 2021; Xu et al., 2020), and there is a need to rely on other disciplines to build a theoretical framework, for example, the concept of "issue salience" in political science research (Dennison, 2019; Helbling & Tresch, 2011; Jenke & Munger, 2019; Miller et al., 2017; Wlezien, 2005).

Overall, web digital trace data and the theoretical framework of issue salience were beneficial for the analysis and explanation of SDP prominence in varied language contexts and at the global and country levels. This theoretical and methodological approach can be recommended for further SDP research.



### **3.4. Conceptual framework and model**

This section is dedicated to answering the research question whether a conceptual framework and model for the definition of the boundaries of the Sport for Development and Peace field can be elaborated to create a methodological ground for future lines of research. It reviews the results of the publication about the conceptual framework for the SDP definition (Appendix C), which corresponds to the research objective to elaborate a model and conceptual framework for the definition of the boundaries of the SDP field, which could serve as a methodological ground for future lines of research.

The mapping of the SDP field through the network analysis (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) and the study of the SDP salience (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, in press) have relied on the broad definition of SDP, aiming to capture the great variety of practices. However, further advancements in the knowledge about SDP structure and the inequalities in its composition and relations would need a more elaborated approach to the definition of SDP boundaries and differentiating relevant agencies. A more nuanced understanding of SDP is needed for capturing power relations in the field, which is also defined as “a contested field” (Giulianotti et al., 2016, p. 131). The existence of competing interests and shortage of resources underpins the struggles of the SDP stakeholders for the higher influence and status, which would support their power to define “legitimate” practices within the field, including the decisions on who belongs to the field (Giulianotti et al., 2016, p. 131).

This doctoral project also engaged with the elaboration of a conceptual framework and a model (a visual summary) for distinguishing the boundaries of SDP and differentiating relevant practices (Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, 2020). The

conceptual framework has been underpinned by some major theoretical considerations, which are summed up below.

The study (Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, 2020) underlined the difficulties in discerning SDP boundaries within the broader field of sport. The analysis distinguished the wide-spread and broad approaches for the definition of SDP boundaries: first, based on a straightforward opposition of SDP to another sporting domain of “development of sport”; second, based on the statement to contribute to non-sporting goals (Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, 2020). Both approaches might be useful for empirical studies, but they have drawbacks because some less relevant activities might be included, i.e., the activities placed at the border of SDP and other sports domains.

In particular, the research (Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, 2020) criticized a widespread definition of SDP boundaries through its opposition to another sports domain of “development of sport” because these two sporting areas sometimes intertwine in theory and practice and do not have a hard border that could serve as a clear differentiating criterion. A need for innovative criteria to distinguish SDP stakeholders and practices was underlined. The study proposed an original set of criteria: intention to contribute to development and peace, management for outcomes, the practice of intended beneficiaries, and a non-sporting component. The criteria are to be applied to mass sport and high-performance sport, to institutionalized sports activities and other activities that are not always recognized within institutionalized sports (varied physical and play activities) (Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, 2020).

The authors (Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, 2020) argued that neither the opposition to development of sport nor the intention to contribute to development and peace should be the only criteria for distinguishing SDP if the task is to provide a more precise definition of SDP, which would serve for finding best practices. The criteria of

“management for outcomes,” “practice of intended beneficiaries,” and “non-sporting component” aim at narrowing the definition of SDP and focusing on the characteristics of SDP practices that let them function as development and peacebuilding tools (Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, 2020).

In summary, the research have created a methodological ground for further empirical research of the SDP structure by specifying SDP practices and clarifying SDP boundaries with other sports practices.

## **4. Future research lines**

This chapter focuses on some future research lines, which are supported by this doctoral project and that have been elaborated at a greater depth.

### **4.1. Mediated visibility of SDP**

The study of the structures of the global SDP field (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) reveals a problematic situation of highly uneven distribution of connections in the field, with evident leaders and outsiders, which needs further investigation. In particular, the “powerful” organizations—non-sporting governing and influential organizations and academic institutions—are significantly more prominent in the SDP field by the number of references from other stakeholders. On the contrary, an important component of the field—practice-oriented agencies—is underprivileged by the number of connections. As well, the powerful global North enjoys a better connection “profile” than the global South. Furthermore, the large number of disconnected or poorly connected agencies is also preoccupying (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021).

The relations in the SDP field were studied through the network of hyperlinks (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021), which are also an important element of online visibility (Ackland, 2013; Shumate & Lipp, 2008). Disproportions in the hyperlinks distributions (Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021) suggest that some stakeholders may enjoy far better online visibility, while visibility in the SDP field is an important resource. SDP agencies need online visibility for promoting their activity and finding partnerships. And, partnerships are often necessary for SDP projects delivery (Lindsey & Bitugu, 2019).

Online visibility is not isolated in the modern media system, and it is advantageous to consider online visibility together with other media subsystems such as the news media that rely on journalism practices. The symbolic capital of the news media still plays a significant role in public agenda-building and supporting legitimacy of organizations and practices (Lee, 2014; Wolfsfeld, 2011).

Overall, future research can focus on further exploration of SDP prominence through the analysis of mediated visibility, quantitative and qualitative characteristics of SDP presence in various media, and how communication works to sustain or disrupt inequalities in the SDP field. The research may rely on the theoretical perspective of networked communication that goes beyond the focus on single media use and engages with interconnected and interdependent media systems (Cardoso, 2008; Foucault Welles & González-Bailón, 2020; Pfetsch et al., 2014). Furthermore, the methodology could rely on digital data about the online visibility of SDP stakeholders' websites, for example, the metrics provided by Ahrefs (ahrefs.com) or other companies specialized in big data.

This research line has been advanced in the original manuscript "Reinforcing the 'power elite'? The mediated (in)visibility of Sport for Development and Peace stakeholders" authored by Herasimovich and Alzua-Sorzabal and submitted to peer-review to the Journal of Global Sport Management (see Appendix D).

#### **4.2. Mapping SDP practices**

The work on the conceptual framework for the definition of the SDP field (Herasimovich & Alzua Sorzabal, 2020) can be continued by collecting empirical evidence of SDP practices and placing them within the depicted schema, thus, creating a map of practices and verifying the theoretical results.

The analysis of SDP as “a contested field” has primarily focused on highlighting the mainstream or marginalised position in the SDP field of varied types of stakeholders such as NGOs, private companies, governmental and intergovernmental organisations, social movements, campaign groups, and prominent individuals (Giulianotti et al., 2016, p. 131). The theoretical revisions have engaged less with the status of different SDP conceptualisations, and there is a need to have empirical evidence of the conceptual struggles in the field. For example, it is argued that “multi-levelled alliances” with their own brands of SDP have been formed (Burnett, 2015, p. 386). However, there is a need for empirical evidence of these formations that would go beyond specific local cases and would characterize the global SDP field.

Theoretically, further research could rely on the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu, which is useful for understanding the structure and power relations in the SDP field (Bardocz-Bencsik & Doczi, 2019; Giulianotti et al., 2016; Schnitzer et al., 2013; Zanotti & Stephenson, 2019). Additionally, for elaborating methodology for empirical study, the research could incorporate the dialectical-relational approach in critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995, 2003, 2013). Furthermore, the study could rely on issue network mapping as a digital method of establishing connections between varied discourses online.

In general, the knowledge about the varying prominence of different approaches to SDP is significant for the analysis of the direction the SDP development takes and policy formulation. In particular, the study would expand the knowledge on power struggles in the SDP field through the analysis of the symbolic capital distribution between different conceptual flows in the field; reveal associated symbolic processes and estimate their role in increasing the prominence of the conceptual flows; forecast directions of the SDP field development to empower elaboration of sports policies.

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## **Appendix A. Publication 1**

Herasimovich, V., & Alzua-Sorzabal, A. (2021).

Communication network analysis to advance mapping ‘sport for development and peace’ complexity: Cohesion and leadership.

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## **Appendix B. Publication 2**

Herasimovich V., & Alzua-Sorzabal, A. (in press)

“Sport for Development and Peace” before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: Using internet search data for monitoring and explaining issue salience.

In M. J. Pando & J. Doistua (Eds.), *La sociedad PostCovid*. Fragua.

This is the authors' original manuscript accepted for publication in the editorial Fragua in 2021.



### **Appendix C. Publication 3**

Herasimovich, V., & Alzua Sorzabal, A. (2020).

A conceptual framework for the definition of the “Sport for Development and Peace” field and the location of best practices.

In I. Lazcano Quintana & A. Díaz Hernández (Eds.), *Representaciones sociales y educativas del ocio* (pp. 49–69). Universidad de Deusto.

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## **Appendix D. Future research**

Herasimovich, V., & Alzua-Sorzabal, A. (2021).

Reinforcing the ‘power elite’? The Mediated (in)visibility of Sport for Development and Peace stakeholders [submitted for publication].

This is the authors’ original manuscript that was submitted to the *Journal of Global Sport Management* in June 2021.