Vacancy / Vacature

PhD research project: de relationship between elite sport and sport for all

SASO
The research assistant will be a member of the research unit Sport & Society (SASO) from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. This unit engages in independent social scientific research in sport as a broad societal phenomenon. The main focus lies on the impact of sport and the evaluation of policy and management processes. Through active dissemination of research findings and educational activities, SASO contributes to the development of policy and practice. Its members also teach in physical education and movement sciences and adult education programs.

Tasks
The graduate teaching assistant personal and societal impact of sport will engage in the following activities:

- Conducting research, possibly leading to a PhD, on the impact of sport in the rehabilitation of persons with a problematic drug addiction and/ or persons in NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Research will be conducted in settings such as de Sleutel in Ghent. Aim of the research is to gain insight into specific sportrelated activities, for whom and how they can have a positive impact on the personal and social development of participants. The doctoral thesis will consist of a systematic literature review, the development of a research design and method, data collection and analysis and at least three papers in international peer reviewed journals.
- Writing research reports and scientific papers.
- Presenting research findings at (international) seminars and conferences.
- Assisting professors in courses on social aspects of sport and sports management and policy (such as integrated working period recreation and revalidation sports and event and project management in sport).
- Supporting students in conducting their master thesis.
- Executing supporting tasks for the research group such as communication, quality management of education, ...
Governments tend to justify large investments in elite sport using the argument that elite athlete success and hosting international sporting events generate numerous positive outcomes. These benefits include improved national identity, pride, international prestige and diplomatic recognition, individual development of talented athletes and the capacity to inspire increased mass participation in sport. But despite these high expectations, the cumulative evidence base for elite sport’s personal and societal impact remains very weak. Because such outcomes of elite sport are assumed to be self-evident, no further evidence appears to be required for governments to justify their high investments in the pursuit of medal winning capability. These policy concerns have led to an increased discussion on the legacy of elite sport investments within the sport policy literature.

This research project is concerned with the question of why nations should care about winning medals, and therefore why they should invest in elite sport. Elite sport’s societal impact is described, among other things, in terms of (a) its inspirational value (e.g., for increased youth participation), (b) its identification value (positive role modeling, empowerment and national pride or identity) and (c) its economic value (related to mega-events, sponsorship, media). Much of the work of SASO (the research unit Sport & Society at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel) is intended to better understand the underlying mechanisms and outcomes of (elite)sporting practices.

The particular interest of this proposal is related to complex relationship between elite sport and mass participation. The unproven relationship between elite success and mass participation leads increasingly to tensions between opposing the political priorities of investing in elite sport for a small group of athletes, and developing a wide range of organisations and facilities for mass participation users. The researcher in this project can further develop the research direction to his/her own interest and competencies. Possible research directions are related to (a) the organization of elite sport versus mass sports in sports federations; (b) the inspirational function of elite performances (international prestige, international recognition, pride, happiness), (c) the inspirational function of elite athletes (sport stars as personalities), (d) the inspirational function and legacy of elite events or (e) social corporate responsibilities of elite sport organisations and elite athletes.

This project requires a full-time researcher, preparing a PhD, during a period of 4 years. The subject is to some extent flexible within the background and interest of the applicant. This includes a systematic literature review, development of the research design, choice of methods, data analysis and reporting. The PhD is delivered as published papers for international peer reviewed journals (min. 3, according to the faculty regulations).

**coordination**
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Marc Theeboom - Prof. Dr. Veerle De Bosscher
Co-supervisor: Prof. Dr. Inge Derom
Requirements

- You have a master degree in preferably sport and movement sciences, sociology, adult educational sciences, (social) pedagogical sciences or social work (but others not excluded)
- An academic teaching degree is an asset.
- You gained excellent results on your academic degrees.
- You have experience with quantitative and qualitative research methods and analysis and preferably gained scientific insights into sports, personal development, health and/or social cohesion through your master thesis and/or similar research projects.
- You are eager to learn to conduct scientific research and generate scientific output (articles, reports, …) necessary for getting a PhD degree.
- You are familiar with sports, or neighbourhood sports, social or youth work.
- Your Dutch is excellent for teaching purposes.
- You can also speak and write fluently in English.
- You are a team player and highly motivated to work towards a PhD.
- You are creative, flexible in work organisation

The following elements are an advantage
- statistical knowledge; have used SPSS (with regard to your involvement in SPLISS 2.0)
- proof of good master thesis evaluation

Information and application

For further details and/or application, please contact:
Prof. Dr. Veerle De Bosscher: vdebossc@vub.ac.be and Inge Derom: Inge.Derom@vub.ac.be

Applications should be sent no later than May 15, preferably by e-mail.

The application should be accompanied by:
- a detailed Curriculum Vitae
- a motivation letter – interest and expectations from a PhD (what do you expect from making a Phd)
- information – if available - about:
  - competences and skills on writing
  - competences with regard to statistics and research skills (e.g. master thesis; statics course during masters or others)
  - competences regarding the English language (speaking and writing)
  - eventual competences and skills related to sport

References – reading (if not available, can be delivered on request)


