

Exploring children's rights: Posthumanist perspectives on recruitment of young boys to a Danish football academy in Uganda.

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Mubumpi

Nava e Denmark mu mwezi gw'agusito okwekkanya entendeke yabaana abalenzi mu kigo kyomupiira ekya elcambio e Masaka mu Uganda. Nakozesa okwetabanganya na batesitesi abayina akakwate muntegeka ye kigo, okutandika okwogera kudembe rya'baana bebasomesa okuba abazanyi b'omupiira. Nagezako okwetaba muntegeka zona ezasoboka okwetabibwamu, okunyumya n'okubuza abatendesi nabakozi abalala abana Uganda n'abadeni. Olupapula luno luvira mundowoza y'obuntu ne bafirosoofa nga Gilles Deleuze ne Felix Guattari abakyusiza engerigyendowoza nokuwandika olupapula luno.

Nagezesa engeri zokuwandika ezenjawulo, mbadde' Uganda okumara emyezi kumi nagumu. Okubeera wano ngabwempandika bikyusiza nyo engeri gyendabamu ebintu byenarimanyiride mu bulamu obwabulijo. Obuzibu bwo kutendeka abalenzi bemyaka musanvu okuzanya omupiira gwempaka nokubateka mukifo ky'omuwakanyi bilaga obulagajavu mukafa ku dembe rya'baana

Size kuwoza obo'kuddamu ekyibuzo kye'dembe rya'baana kubanga kino ekibuzo kizibu nyo omuntu omu okukidamu nga abatesitesi bona tebatademu manyi okukyusa ngabavira kuntandikwa. Bwetugamba nti abaana b'enkya waffe ,tulina obuvunanyizibwa bwokugazeko okukyusa ekifananyi no kukwatira ebigo muvunanyizibwa bwabwe .

Translated by Ruth Ruzindana.

Resumé

Jeg forlod Danmark i begyndelsen af august 2019 for at undersøge rekrutteringen af unge drenge til et dansk fodboldakademi i Uganda. Mit mål var at blive kritisk involveret med så mange forskellige mennesker som muligt som var relateret til rekrutteringens processen. Målet var ikke at skulle gengive denne proces, men jeg var i stedet interesseret i at skabe så mange forskellige perspektiver på børns rettigheder når børnene blev rekrutteret. Jeg forsøgte ikke at distancere mig til feltarbejdet. I stedet forsøgte jeg at praktisere en anderledes kritisk og aktivistisk form for etnografi. Jeg opsøgte konfrontationer og diskussioner hos ugandiske og danske trænere, scouts, akademiets medarbejdere og frivillige samt hos den danske direktør. Feltarbejdet, skriveprocessen og projektet generelt var udarbejdet fra en posthumanistisk position som medførte at jeg tog forskellige valg forskelligt i forbindelse med filosofiske og metodiske overvejelser. Jeg forsøgte aktivt at benytte mig af tekst og skrivning som et performativt redskab hvor jeg kunne illustrere kompleksiteten om børns rettigheder og akademiets rekruttering. Jeg levede i Uganda 11 ud af de sidste 18 måneder og jo mere tid jeg var der jo mere kæmpede jeg også med at gøre det kendte ukendt. Mit etnografiske arbejde forårsagede mange forskellige dilemmaer hvor jeg konstant blev mindet om min forestilling om at jeg ville være en ansvarlig forsker. Jeg var i midten af et akademi som rekrutterede drenge helt ned i 7 års alderen. Dette vil for altid være problematisk med børns rettigheder fordi hvad eller hvem er topprioriteten? Er det akademiets visioner om at skabe rollemodeller og professionelle spillere eller er det tanker om at et barn for alt i verden skal være nærmest sin familie? Jeg giver ikke et direkte svar uden også at have illustreret hvor kompliceret dette er, og jo flere aktører der involveres jo mere kompleks. Hvad jeg dog foreslår, er at der er håb og muligheder for en bedre fremtid for børn som er relateret til fodboldakademier. En bedre fremtid hvor ugandiske børn og familier ikke udnyttes af internationale akademier som er tilstede med en dækhistorie om humanisme.

Abstract

I left Denmark at the beginning of august 2019 to investigate how recruitment of young boys was practised at a Danish football academy in Uganda. I aimed to critically engage with as many people who were related to the recruitment process, not so much to clarify a specific practice, but I was more interested in creating perspectives on children's rights from a critical ethnographic approach. As an ethnographer, a critical ethnographer, I did not seek to distance myself from my work. I deliberately involved myself as much as possible through an activist style where I did not avoid confrontations or discussions. I tried to do so with Ugandan and Danish academy coaches, scouts, staff members, volunteers and the director of El Cambio Academy. This project departure from a posthumanism position and was inspired by different philosophers mainly Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari who affected me and the project to practise and write research differently.

I tried to experiment with styles of writings. I used texts and writing as an active element where new thoughts could evolve. I lived in Uganda the past eleven out of eighteen months, and the more time I was there, the more I experienced the struggle of making the familiar strange. I think my confrontational ethnographic work could be interpreted as some kind of wrestling with things that slowly had become familiar, which I thought forever would be strange to me. This wrestle caused many dilemmas during the fieldwork, where I constantly select my actions because I imagined myself as a responsible researcher. Being in the middle of an academy that recruits boys from they are seven years old will forever be problematic when it is thought with a children's rights principles - because who or what is the top priority? I do not provide a single answer, because it is far more complicated when many different actors get involved, but what I argue is that there could be a potentially different and better future for children related to academies.

A better future where families and children from Uganda no longer are taken advantage of by international football academies who are there with a cover story of humanism.

Thanks to

I remember that a person once told me "Lasse, nobody reads this text anyway. So, make it quick". However, I always read this section in other people's work because I think it offers me the opportunity to connect or relate to the person behind the computer.

Nevertheless, there are a few 'thanks' I would like to hand out concerning this project. Thanks to the funds who decided to support this semester abroad which made it possible to live half a year in this beautiful country of Uganda where this writing took place from the beginning to the end. Thanks to my bank that allowed me to tear my account apart when the funds could not cover anymore – the "bank" also includes my parents... Moreover, thanks to you two for accepting my unstoppable joy for travelling and expanding my horizons far away from Aalborg. Thanks to everyone that I met during my time at El Cambio Academy, we disagreed a lot, which I think was helpful for all of us. Thanks to the manager who hosted me – I owe you forever a meal and good trips road trips – we do not have pineapple fields in Denmark, but lots of potatoes?

Webale nyo Ruth Ruzindana, for everything and thanks for making the first and maybe most important page in this project.

Thanks to Simon at home for watering the plants and helping out with many things during this project.

Special thanks to the person who has helped me with grammar and language during this project – I owe you lots of colas!

Thank you Sine Agergaard. Thank you for your time and thank you for when you told me that I was lost. A pleasure even in difficult times.

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Introduction

Through my previous studies of talent development in Uganda, and through reading existing literature about football academies in Africa, I have come to realise the need for further studies and reflections on children's rights. This is the topic of my current study that focuses on the recruitment of young boys to a specific Danish football academy in Uganda, and the actors involved in these processes; ranging from academy staff and scouts to young boys and their families, football intermediaries, caretakers and coaches.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has already made four cross-cutting principles with the purpose of having these principles applied when working with children and making decisions that affect them. The principles can be thought of as a framework; a children's rights ethos (Yilmaz et al., 2018), that serves to protect children in every circumstance. These are:

- primary consideration must be given to the best interests of the child in all actions affecting them (Article 3);
- the child has a right to participation in all matters affecting them (Article 12);
- the child has a right to survival and development (Article 6); and
- the child has a right to non-discrimination (Article 2)

These principles apply to every minor; as defined by UNCRC, as every human being under the age of 18 (UNCRC, Article 1). However, as useful and universal as these principles may seem, they are, in fact, complicated and elusive when applied and operationalized in different geographical contexts (Mason et al., 2019). Mason et al., (2019) conclude that "upholding the rights of the children to be protected from economic exploitation..." (p. 15) will remain a challenge for football due to its commercial interests and its "profit driven practices" (p. 15). Furthermore, Mason et al., (2019) advise future research to design and implement

strategies that "both recognises and operationalises children's agency in order to inform and influence regulatory frameworks and practices" (p. 3-4). This indicates a turn towards research with children's rights in the front line, not only when research is theoretically framed and analysed but also when researchers disseminate their work. This could be a sign for researchers to start taking responsibility and realize their potential to change opinions, create discussions, share perspectives and knowledge across cultures, countries, continents, domains and fields as they interact with a wide range of actors in the world of football.

This project takes place in Uganda, at a football academy called El Cambio Academy that is run by a Danish NGO. 'El Cambio' is Spanish and means "the change". It is located in Buganda west of Lake Victoria and is a football academy which programs were launched in mid-2018. They have currently twelve boys, 7-12 years, enrolled in their football, education and character program. El Cambio Academy describes themselves as an NGO, and they characterize themselves as an organization that works for the general development of Uganda. At the same time, they offer free education and football training to a handful of talents who are carefully picked among thousands of young boys who play football in the central region of Uganda. El Cambio Academy is founded and run by a Danish man who operates as the director, and he has designed and created the academy from the very beginning. A part of El Cambio Academy's strategy is to allow talented children to reach their full potential and follow their dream of becoming professional football players. El Cambio Academy describes themselves as a place where they nurture talents in an elite environment while they make sure that the children live a healthy childhood with safe surroundings and education. A part of El Cambio Academy's vision is that the children will give back to their community either through professional football players or they pursue a career through their education. Furthermore, El Cambio Academy is practising a character development program as they believe such programs are a solution to creating the next generation of role models and leaders of Uganda and Africa. El Cambio Academy is funded through a chain of NGOs

that starts in Denmark and ends in Uganda. This means that funds from private persons as well as companies donate money to a Danish NGO who then transfers the funds to Uganda. In my ethnographic fieldwork at El Cambio Academy, I am interested in how children's rights and the four cross-cutting principles could be thought in relation to the academy's recruitment of minors. The fieldwork was performed from the perspective of critical ethnography (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005), where I aim to create and examine material by highlighting and advocating children's rights through conversations, dialogue, and discussions with different actors involved. Aligned with the recommendations suggested by Mason et al., (2019), this project also aims to stimulate debates about "the methodological and conceptual approaches that may be used to continue the analysis of children's engagement with professional sport" (Mason et al., 2019, p. 15). In an attempt to do so, this project relies on and advocates new styles of writing about critical issues. Here sensory experiences, thoughts, different actors' perspectives expressed in different tales and experimental texts are used to develop an encompassing understanding and to make sense of El Cambio Academy's recruitment process, the actors involved and issues about children's rights in particular. Through my study, I aim to contribute to the existing literature on football academies that recruit young football talents in various African countries. I argue that experimental ethnographic texts containing personal reflections and stories open up new understandings and reflections. These kinds of text cannot be found yet in the existing literature, and I argue that we need diverse literature and research to be able to transform exploitative practices for children. As I mentioned before I have learned a lot about the complexities of the recruitment process for young boys alongside the perspectives of many different actors here in Uganda. Therefore, I argue, that these complexities can be written about in a potentially beneficial way if I, (as the author), experiment with writings containing different perspectives and reflections.

I am inspired by post qualitative inquiry in which it is acknowledged that experimenting with writing is a tool for the possibility of developing another, not-yet, created perspective on a topic (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; St. Pierre, 2018). Entering the language and field of post qualitative inquiry has consequences for this project that comes to rely on different philosophical ideas than if it followed conventional qualitative research (St. Pierre, 2018; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). It "cannot be a social science methodology with pre-existing methods and research practices a researcher can apply" (St. Pierre, 2018, p. 1). And as Mason et al., (2019) calls for other methodologies in research it is a reliable indicator for the necessity of "practical experimentation and the creation of the not yet instead of the repetition of what is." (St. Pierre, 2018, p.1) There is an urgent need for other ways of thinking, writing and creating texts in the troubling times where children still are exploited in the recruitment for a powerful football industry (Mason et al., 2019). Just as it is a necessity and an urgent situation that needs other inquiries, it is also essential to notice that this project is not claiming to end up with final solutions or rock-solid conclusions through its writings, because using Gilles Deleuze's philosophy means acknowledging that life is in a constant process of becoming. Life is continually developing and in movement. Stability is an illusion (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), and stability is not something that I strive for through this project or through the styles of writing. These ideas are important as it allows me in this project to create perspectives that might not be thought about when talking about children's rights and football academies' cherry-picking of minors in Uganda and across Africa.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to think El Cambio Academy's recruitment of minors differently, through experimental styles of writing that can contribute with new perspectives on the crucial and complex discussions about children's rights and academy football.

State of the art

Based on a structured literature search focused on football, football academies, and talent development, I aim to show how research on this topic has developed over the last decades. The search contained the following words: football, soccer, talent, recruitment, academy, Africa, Uganda, and children's rights. Three databases were searched: (1) Physical education index, (2) Scopus, and (3) SPORTDiscus. The literature search resulted in 368 hits: 362 articles and 5 book chapters. However, the majority of the studies on which the identified articles and chapters were based were conducted in different countries in West Africa while no articles were concerned with describing the issues mentioned in a specifically Ugandan context.

Football Migration from Africa to Europe

Since the 1930s male African football players have moved from their home countries to European football clubs and leagues (Darby et al., 2007; Poli, 2010a). To begin with, the movement and migration of footballers primarily involved footballers from northern Africa, but as many African countries officially gained independence from the colonial powers that had ruled them, more European countries started to search for new talents in the western part of Africa. Since the 1990s, the migration of African footballers has increased as an increasing number of countries leagues and clubs in Europe have become interested in recruiting African players. Thus, at the present moment, around 350 footballers are playing in top divisions (Darby, 2007). The majority of these players come from Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Ghana (Darby, Akindes & Kirwin, 2007; Poli, 2010b). At the same time, concerns about this situation have been raised with critics positing that the European market is highly exploitative and takes advantage of the relatively cheap labour and raw talent of African countries (Yilmaz et al., 2018, Darby et al., 2007).

The increase in migration of footballers to European clubs and leagues has caught researchers' interest over the last decades and has been tied to research in globalisation and commodification of sport (Bale & Maguire, 1994). Much of the research has examined different aspects of migration from a macro perspective focusing mostly on describing the recruitment channels, flows and networks within countries, between countries, and across continents (Elliot & Maguire, 2008). Furthermore, much of the research stresses the significance and importance of global power relations for African footballers' routes to European countries and focus on how interdependent recruitment networks shape a particular pathway for the players (Engh, 2014). Research has drawn on theoretical perspective from figuration sociology and world systems theory (Engh, 2014), and researchers have argued that African footballers migration is shaped by European clubs and actors acting like neo-colonialists that take advantage of and exploit an underdeveloped football culture and structure in Africa (Bale, 2004, Darby, 2000; Darby et al., 2007; Poli, 2005).

Footballers are often considered as objects in the literature that are moved by global flows and analysed with attention to macro perspectives in the trends of migration (Engh, 2014). Some micro-sociological studies have shown that social relations described as 'friends-of-friends-networks' (Bale, 1991) play an essential role in the migration process. These networks have been identified to consist of relations between former and current athletes and coaches (Bale, 1991), as well as intermediaries (Darby et al., 2007) who operate as "bridgeheads" (Meyer, 2001) as they play a crucial role in providing footballers' access to new clubs and new markets in the football industry (Darby et al., 2007).

Christian Ungruhe (2016) took a step further into the research of micro-sociological factors that influence migration practices at a local level, and he concluded that "football migration practices are deeply embedded in local understandings of spatial and social mobility" (p. 1781). Ungruhe (2016) points out through his

ethnographic research in Ghana that the migration of a player is not only an individual project but are a part of a broader picture where the player has to translate his success into the "local setting – in his family but also beyond kin relations to peers and – in the event of great success – on levels beyond personal relationships" (p. 1781). Ungruhe (2016) shows that the player's agency is a big part of the migration and the aftermath depending on the success of his migration. Though, success, in this case, is not only depending on how much money the player would earn but how the player constitutes as what Ungruhe (2016) refers to as 'a somebody' (p. 1781) which is a "caring, matured and responsible person who connects 'his people' with his achievements" (p. 1781). Another ethnographic study (Engh & Agergaard, 2015) has investigated how Nigerian women footballers migrate out of their own country and into Scandinavian football clubs and shown that "despite unequal power relations that shape the global trade in athletic talent, sports migrants assert agency and control over important aspects of transnational movement and mobility" (p. 974). Engh and Agergaard (2015) illustrate how 'friends-of-friends-networks' (Bale, 1991) develop between different actors in the migration process and the Nigerian players where the players take control of the process and find solutions where they profit the most and secure their mobility and migration in Europe and Scandinavia. Engh & Agergaard (2015) argue that the footballers have taken over the roles as intermediaries and created networks between themselves, other coaches and clubs in Scandinavia. This active engagement from the players is happening as they are still playing professionally and is a part of how they can achieve migration by "manoeuvring structural opportunities and barriers" (p. 989).

These examples of ethnographic research illustrate that there is many different processes and elements at stake at the micro-level. These important processes give insights to local practices (Ungruhe, 2016) and how players play an active role in the migration process and arrange it across continents (Engh & Agergaard, 2015) despite power relations that continue to be out of balance.

Football academies

As the migration of African footballers has increased radically since the 1930s and with a 100% increase in the period from 1995/1996 to 2004/2005 going from 882 to 1803 footballers (Poli, 2006), football academies have mushroomed across the African continent (Darby et al., 2007). Since I am interested in football academies, particularly their recruitment processes, in this section, I will briefly highlight what the existing research has been focusing on concerning this aspect of different African football academies.

Football academies have been analysed with network-oriented theories, and researchers have concluded that academies play a crucial role in scouting, recruiting, training, and transferring talents to professional leagues outside of their respective countries in Africa (Poli, 2006b). Furthermore, with inspiration from theories about 'global value chains' (GVC) and 'global production networks' (GPN) football academies have been viewed as some of the first steps in the chains through which African footballers accumulate value (Darby 2013). Darby (2013) illustrates how a GVC model "helps us understand how the various elements of trade are structured transnationally" (p. 52) and how local Ghanaian actors respond, adapt and act in a global multi-directional network with especially Europe. Darby (2013) highlight that Ghanaian football actors still compete unequally with European counterparts but however, Ghanaian football is taking more and more action and creating the best foundation for future involvement in migration of football labour.

Different football clubs have established different kinds of academies across several African countries, and according to Darby et al., (2007), there are different kinds of academies. These different kinds of academies differ from one another in the ways they are organized with regards to the establishment, structure, economic position, and international influence. Thus, Darby et al., (2007) list four different types of academies: the first type of academy is organized and run by African clubs under the African national federations. These academies function in ways similar to those existing in Europe. The second kind of academy is run collaboratively by coalitions of African and European partners in a way that allows European clubs to recruit

football talents from their collaborating academy in Africa. The third kind of academy can be characterized as 'private or corporate-sponsored' (p. 149). These kinds of academies are typically both well-equipped and well-funded by donations or investments from private individuals, international support or companies such as Nike and Tullow (Oil company). The fourth type of academy may be characterized as improvised academies. These academies usually have less than optimal facilities as well as poorly educated staff who work in an 'ad hoc' manner (p. 149).

Darby et al., (2007) argues that some of the football academies offer alternatives to the lack of formal structures and professionalism and offer opportunities or hope for young talents to develop their athletic abilities in ways that may eventually result in a career as a professional footballer with full-time employment in one of the European leagues. At least this dream is what drives many of the African talents and what serves as a critical motivation for academy staff as well (Poli, 2010; Darby et al., 2007). Football in general and football academies, in particular, have been said to provide more than just an opportunity for individuals' financial gain, however. Also, football and football academies have also been hailed for their capacity to facilitate positive socio-economic opportunities as a pathway for education (Alegi, 2010) and social status and capital gains that motivate footballers into academies and Europe (Botelho & Agergaard, 2011; Darby, 2007a; Poli, 2010).

The increasing collaboration between Europe and African countries has almost naturally caused an increase in academies as well to a stage that can be described a complex situation due to much different interest surrounding recruitment and talent development (Poli, 2006b). The increased activity has resulted in a growing number of people becoming directly involved in facilitating recruitment and transfer of young footballers from African countries to Europe to the extent that intermediaries, scouts, and managers have become highly influential actors in football, and in individual footballers' lives (Poli, 2010; Yilmaz et al., 2018). This situation and its effects have led researchers, media, and human rights organizations to express

concerns about the way young African players and children are enrolled in profit environments that are exploitative as intermediaries and clubs speculate in "wage dumping" (Poli, 2010). This has contributed to the discussion whether football academies should be considered a post-colonial phenomenon where European clubs and actors take advantage of an underdeveloped football structure in Africa and vulnerable players (Darby et al., 2007; Donnelly & Petherick, 2004; Esson & Drywood, 2018).

A new type of academy: a fifth?

A study made by McGee (2018) took a turn away from analysing an academy purely from a perspective of globalisation theories and network-oriented ideas towards focusing at the influence of the academy's policies on the football talent. This ethnographic study took place at an academy called Right To Dream in Ghana, which is a part of a new wave of NGO academies established in various African countries since 1990 (McGee, 2018). This study is particularly interesting for my project for two reasons: First, it took place in an academy which is the inspiration for El Cambio Academy in Uganda. Both academies claim to be NGOs that work for sustainable development of football talents, local communities, the country and the continent of Africa. Second, the study is ethnographic and highlights the moral implications of a football academy that impose development goals on young children who have to give up family relations and connection to communities in the pursuit of a football career (McGee, 2018). Outsourcing moral responsibility for Africa and Africans futures back onto its youth while disrupting their personal ties to communities, family and tradition, make McGee (2018) raise a critique and question whether this is an NGOs responsibility to moralize the youth. Alongside, is an academic focus slowly rising towards children's rights-based analysis of recruitment of children into academies that could lead to future migration (Yilmaz et al., 2018). Yilmaz et al., (2018) writes that "To date, there has been limited consideration of the connection between children's rights theory and the regulations of football industry related to recruitment and transfer practices" (p. 2) which is where this project will be situated.

Children's rights research

Research has documented that children's engagement with the football industry can expose them to sexual abuse, emotional and physical harm, financial exploitation and human trafficking and by that contravene with their rights as described in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Esson, 2015; Yilmaz et al., 2018). There has been an ongoing discussion on how best to ensure that "the interest and well-being of the young football players are adequately protected, and risk to their rights and welfare are identified and addressed" (Mason et al., 2019, p. 2-3). Mason et al., (2019) conclude and highlights the "importance of designing and implementing research that both recognises and operationalises children's agency in order to inform and influence regulatory frameworks and practices" (p. 3-4). By drawing on previous research and recommendations of Mason et al., (2019) I aim to focus on the relations between different actors that are active during the recruitment of minor football talent. A minor is defined as every human being under the age of 18 (Article 1), and the involved actors vary from academy staff, coaches (Danish and Ugandan) and the director to family members in this project. Due to the fact that most of the research that exists on football migration from Europe to Africa and African football academies have drawn on globalization theory and macro-sociological perspectives, this project aims to critically study children's rights from a micro-sociological perspective through an ethnographic approach. I argue that through an ethnographic approach, it will become possible to create new perspectives on children's rights in a recruitment process to an academy which is also an NGO. I argue that micro-sociological perspectives can contribute with new insight and illustrate that ensuring children's rights is complex, and it is essential to engage actively as a researcher in the complexities to create new futures.

Raw football talent or minor?

I have noticed a particular language within the existing literature. No matter if the aim of the studies is to describe global structures of migration, power dynamics or the various actors' motivation the choice of word to describe young football players varies from: Raw talent (Darby, 2007), athletic migrant (Elliott & Maguire, 2011), footballer (Darby et al., 2007), talent (Poli, 2010). There is more within this discourse that nevertheless indicates an objectification of the person with a certain set of skills within the sport of football. Although Yilmaz et al., (2018) article is a direct engagement with children's rights and talent development, recruitment and migration the language used are still referring to a specific identity of the child. Yilmaz et al., (2018) describes minors as "young talent" (p. 7). I do not argue that authors solely stick to one specific concept of the actor who is involved, and that of course also illustrate the complexities and multiple identities that the actor (player, talent, minor, young talent, raw talent) have. What I argue is that the choice of language (down to a particular word) influences what we as readers are directed to think and reflect upon. The value of language is powerful, creative and at the same time limiting – which makes me argue that researchers are responsible for reflecting upon which language they chose to use in the area they study. That is why I in this study have chosen to stick to concepts and words that describe young boys as 'young boys', 'young children', 'minors' and not 'young talents' or 'young raw talents'. I do this because I think that a change in language, from 'raw talent' to 'minor', might open up another understanding of recruitment practices to academies.

Philosophy: Introduction to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari

In the following section, I will try to describe how Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) alone and together with his friend and colleague Félix Guattari (1930-1992) have inspired my project and how their philosophical ideas have helped me to form different methods and writings. Many readers describe Deleuze and Guattari's writings as a struggle to read and understand (St. Pierre, 2017) due to their vocabulary and language that is always developing and creative. Deleuze and Guattari make us wonder, they confuse us, and they refuse to give the reader a sense of stability in their reading – they push the reader to think and wonder by presenting a concept that we might just have fallen in love with to then develop that very concept into something new (St. Pierre, 2017). To read Deleuze and Guattari's work is to be introduced into a world of proliferating beings and new forms of life (May, 2005) and their philosophy can be characterized as creation and experimentation in life that is continually becoming. To illustrate how Deleuze and Guattari use language I want to show this quote:

To become imperceptible oneself, to have dismantled love in order to become capable of loving. To have dismantled one's self in order finally to be alone and meet the true double at the other end of the line. A clandestine passenger on a motionless voyage. To become like everybody else; but this, precisely, is a becoming only for one who knows how to be nobody, to no longer be anybody. To paint oneself gray on gray (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 218)

This is an example of how Deleuze and Guattari use words and constructs sentences and pieces of text which is very difficult to understand. They do not offer any straight forward reading. While disturbing the reader because of the unusual way of using language they are at the same time proving the ability that lies within language and words. They write through a language that is nonfamiliar and untraditional, they use illustrations and make theoretical connections through various field to create other realities and show us that possibilities are endless.

What I have come to know, which I think is essential to notice as well, is that their texts have to be read from a perspective different from the one that has informed traditional approaches. I have always looked and searched for the 'real' meaning of a text as if there was a deeper understanding that I needed to uncover, find or discover. We tend to read from a perspective where we are searching for 'past meanings', a meaning that the author had during the writing in the past. But I think it is necessary to leave that kind of reading behind. Deleuze and Guattari's ideas and concepts make the reader feel and experience the lack of a final understanding - their work feels as something infinite, and it connects in multiple directions all the time. I think this is important for Deleuze and Guattari but also my texts - we have to let go of the desire to comprehend or understand a text - that desire of control will only hinder our ability to experience it, think with it, and use it.

It is, to use an example from my fieldwork, a bit like discussing children's rights with a Ugandan coach. We can exchange perspectives and create new ones while simultaneously becoming something else; something that we were not aware of or may never be aware of. I used this during the fieldwork as a premise for creating perspectives and not so much for seeking this deep understanding and meaning behind statements. The texts should be read from a performative perspective where it is more about what the text does to the reader, what the texts make you think of, what other perspectives are created and what could be created. Because I argue that unconventional styles of writing that never stabilize make it possible to illustrate and show different perspectives aligned with the purpose of this study.

Ontology of creation

In the following section, I will try to explain how Deleuze and Guattari's ontology is understood and how it makes me enter a position in posthumanism and post qualitative research. Deleuze and Guattari argue that ontology involves creation rather than discovery (May, 2005) which moves the focus from how other thinkers have perceived ontology in discovering the nature of the universe's fundamental entities to see ontology

differently (May, 2005). Deleuze and Guattari argue that an ontology focused on discovery seems to be a reduction of possibilities, a narrowing of perspective that ends up simplifying the universe (May, 2005).

Contrary to such understandings, Deleuze and Guattari focus on an ontology that creates possibilities for life rather than dictating its limits (May, 2005). Entering an ontological position where I am less concerned about what there *is* and more concerned about what might *be*, shifts the whole idea of doing research. For example, from such a position 'methods' are no longer tools of discovery that would give us access to a world 'out there' (St. Pierre, 2018). Methods and research from a Deleuzian position are always creative and not revealing or discovering hidden truths about a world outside our perception (Law, 2004). The purpose of this study is not to say "it was like this at the academy" or "it is like this with children's right", which would imply that I had somehow managed to discover something stable as a researcher. I might in some cases write that "this is an exploitation of children and Ugandan families", but at the same time also show alternative perspectives that illustrate how difficult it is to state something like that.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue that all life is a plane of becoming and that the perception of stable or fixed beings - such as man - is an effect of becoming. 'Man' is no longer privileged as the grounding being that knows and views a world of change and becoming. This means that as a researcher, I do not claim to be in a position where I view a world outside that is changing. I am part of the world, and the world is changing me, and I am changing the world as well (St. Pierre, 2018). This idea means that I do not view children's rights, experiences, or humans as static elements, and I do not position myself with the ability to represent other people's experiences or opinions. Instead, I try to create and develop opinions and discussions through my engagement with the people that I interact with during the time at the academy. I tried to create rather than discover, which is a fundamental assumption for Deleuze and Guattari's ontology (May, 2005). Deleuze and Guattari invite their readers to think differently and try to think beyond structures and orders that seem familiar

to us. This idea has inspired me to conduct fieldwork and writings differently, hoping that it will create new understandings and perspectives about children's rights and the actors involved in processes of children's recruitment to El Cambio Academy.

It is at the heart of all Deleuze and Guattari's thinking that they insist that understanding and thinking demand that we go beyond the seeming order and sameness of things to the chaotic and active becoming which is the very pulse of life (Colebrook, 2002, p. xxxiv). I argue that Deleuze and Guattari insist that we are responsible for acting upon life, though it is chaotic and pulsive. They argue that we have to go beyond the seeming order, which I argue is a call for experimentation where we try to create a new form of being.

As mentioned in the previous section, Deleuze and Guattari, are creative and experiment with their vocabulary and use of language to illustrate that concepts. They show us that the seeming stability of concepts is... unstable. Hence, Deleuze and Guattari want us to "abandon the search for conceptual stability and begin to see what there is in terms of difference rather than identity" (May, 2005, p. 19). I do not wish to create stability around recruitment processes or children's rights in any straightforward way in this project. Instead, I argue that I have a responsibility as a researcher to illustrate the complexities surrounding this topic, the instability – critically. A responsibility because I am no longer a researcher who is discovering the world I am a researcher who is creating worlds. When 'creating' is a premise for this position it calls for a responsibility to ask what might then be created? I cannot claim to be responsible if I at the same time try to hide and argue that I can passively observe and investigate a reality (St. Pierre, 2018).

Philosophy does not settle things according to Deleuze – it disturbs them. Philosophy is "the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 2). Philosophy disturbs the stable world of identities by producing different concepts that disrupt and disturb those identities that we have come to know as 'our world' – and this is where Deleuze and Guattari's ontology differs 'traditional' ontology that likes

to match concepts to what there is, what we know, to form stable identities (May, 2005). An example from the fieldwork was how I discussed the boys' fixed identities as 'talents' and what such a fixation meant for them as children. This created different conversations that were connected to children's rights because an interesting question to ask was "Who is deciding what this child is?" – which were the academy and coaches as they categorized them as 'super talents' or 'raw talents' – but was it in the best interest of the child to be defined as a talent? The following question we talked about was "is it conflicting with the boys' rights if you as an institution fix his identity from such a young age? And then work towards making that identity become his only identity?".

As I mentioned earlier there is no such thing as stability. Life in all its forms is changing. No matter how hard we would like to grasp the world and control elements it will forever be a possible mission from a Deleuze and Guattarian position. As I describe their ontology as an ontology of creation it is also an ontology of relations. They illustrate this by describing everything as existing at a flattened plane. There is no hierarchy between elements and everything is or can be connected (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Karen Barad (2007) explains this position where the:

... the knower does not stand in a relation of absolute externality to the natural world there is no such exterior observational point... We are not outside observers of the world. Neither are we simply located at particular places in the world; rather, we are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity (p. 184).

This is a different position from humanism where the human is centred. But what is very important to notice for this position is that we are neither passively located in a particular place in the world. We are instead a part of the world as Karen Barad mentions where we are a part of its ongoing activity. Deleuze and Guattari also describe this connective relational position as “There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world), and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)” (Deleuze

& Guattari, 1987, p. 23). A position in this relational ontology also means that there can be no division between epistemology and ontology, the “knower” or the “field of subjectivity” is part of the world as well, connected and creating each other together. Karen Barad (2007) writes:

Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated. We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming. The separation of epistemology from ontology is a reverberation of a metaphysics that assumes an inherent difference between human and nonhuman, subject and object, mind and body, matter and discourse (p. 185).

As mentioned, this position of a creative and relational ontology calls for researchers and humans, in general, to take responsibility due to the realization of our intra-actions and connections being a part of the world. I argue that this is a responsible position to engage with this field from as it emphasises that I am connected to everything more than I might even realize when I do the fieldwork, talk to people and write this very project at my computer. May (2005) writes that Deleuze and Guattari highly encourage humans to take further responsibility in life and the creation of different forms of life and he writes that such thing can be approached from asking a question of *how might one live?*

How might one live?

This question is of great interest to Deleuze and Guattari – but they approach the question as a complex one (May, 2005). The question is not solely a question related to human beings - it can be a mouth, a horse, a gesture, a style, a relationship (May, 2005). The reason why this question is not solely related to humans is due to the fact that humans are not raised above or separated from the world ontologically. St. Pierre (2017) writes that everything exists on the same flat ontological plane where a “galloping horse, the color red, a representation of a bird, the concept justice, and five-o’clock-in-the-afternoon” (p. 1081) enjoy the same ontological status. For Deleuze and Guattari (1994) the question is ontological because it refers to life and being can be created but not for the human alone. The question is not asked “how should one live?” because it would refer to some kind of a standard ‘out there’ which life should correspond to and align with. There is

no such standard for living and therefore Deleuze and Guattari ask the question of “how might one live?” as it directly turns the focus towards creation. Thus, to understand the concept of living exclusively in relation to humans and their existence "is to commit the error of humanism, the error of believing that the proper perspective for understanding the world is centred on the viewpoint of the human subject" (May, 2005, p. 24). This idea about the status of human beings is central for Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy in the sense that they try “to pry us” (May, 2015, p. 24) 'away' from humanism by decentring humans, placing them with the same ontological status connected to everything else. This is also to be seen in how Deleuze and Guattari interpret the question as they do not limit it to be asked for humans. How might one live? The 'one' can be one who lives, but so can my hand or a minor's relation to a football academy or the way an academy navigates around (or with) children's right in the field of football. Deleuze and Guattari argue that there is no reason to privilege human being above everything else, and meanwhile they do not give us any answers to the question of how might one live? This is essential as it emphasises how everything in the world is connected while they at the same time do not produce a manual for living. And so do I not aim to provide any straight forward manual for how children's rights should be understood or lived. Rather, I argue that by illustrating the complexities surrounding the issue of children's rights and football academies, other (better) opportunities for future practices may come to the fore. In other words, if we probe differences and complexities, we discover our future possibilities for how we might live. May (2005) writes that:

We need not conform. Indeed, if our lives are to be interesting ones, capable of new feelings, new pleasures, new thoughts, and experiences, we must not conform. Deleuze offers us a radically different way to approach living, and an attractive one, as long as we are willing to ask anew what it is to be us and what it is to be living. As long as we are willing to accept that ontology does not offer answers but rather ways to approach the question of living. As long as we turn to his work not to settle old questions or old scores but instead to become unsettled. In short, as long as we are willing to do philosophy (p. 25).

And I think this is important to think with as we move on in this project: Are you as the reader willing to accept that I do not offer single answers and single perspectives but rather ways to approach the questions and

dilemmas related to children's rights and recruitment processes into football academies through experimental writings that aim to create new perspectives that can create new and different realities (Law, 2004).

Rhizome

In the project, I draw on the concept of 'rhizome' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). In the following section, I will try to unfold how it is useful to think with, as it illustrates how the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari is multiple and relational. The rhizome is one of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concepts which is very popular to think with as it offers a useful way for understanding how things are or can be connected in an infinite number of different ways. People who have their own garden and then also do a lot of gardening probably know what a 'rhizome' is in botanical terms. The rhizome is a kind of plant (for example, Kudzu, "wandering Jew") that shows up out of the ground over an expanding area, leaving behind the impression that many separate plants are emerging in close proximity to one another, but in fact, these individual plants are parts of one big plant and are interconnected under the ground. A rhizome grows horizontally and not vertically, which once again illustrates how things expand and develop on a flattened surface. A rhizome has the ability to make connections and shoot out new roots in any direction. The rhizome is characterised by having no beginning and no end (May, 2005). In relation to this project, it would be impossible to say when it started, and it would be a tremendous oversimplification by claiming that the project started when I went physically to Uganda in August 2019. If I try to explain when it started, I would always find myself as being in the middle of it. In Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) work the rhizome figures as a philosophical concept inspired by the botanical term, suggesting that all things in the world are rhizomes or rhizomatically interconnected - even if many of these connections are not always visible (as the plant roots growing all over/under your garden). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe this structure in opposition to the structure of trees. A tree grows vertically, with roots, a trunk, branches and then leaves. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write that a tree has a beginning: the

roots and an end: the leaves. In that sense, a tree is a hierarchical system that allows one to point out a centre for its growth.

I have more than once up until now written "to think with", or something similar and this idea to think with concepts and theories are mainly inspired by the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). To 'think with' means that I try to make connections and expand the existing network of ideas so that other perspectives can be thought and felt differently. This could be characterised as a rhizomatic thought (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) as my texts aim to create new perspectives, not so much through an understanding but more through what the texts make us feel and what it is possible to create from there.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987) is 'thinking' and 'thought' rhizomes. To think is to make new connections rhizomatically. Thinking with the rhizome made it possible for me to seek out other possible connections with methods and writings as the idea is to always create and explore new possibilities when you engage with rhizomatic thinking. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) encourage researchers, people, not to follow a certain specific way of thinking, and this has inspired me to be creative in the engagement with children's rights and methods.

Another illustration is how the rhizome allowed me to be creative about methods. Thinking with the rhizome made me wonder and reflect upon methods descriptions and their boundaries. But when methods were thought with the rhizome it also made the boundaries seem less important or non-existing as the rhizome emphasises seeking and making new connections (methods). One example of this from my fieldwork comes from a talk I had with two coaches. At different times during that conversation, they asked me about recruitment processes in Denmark. I entered a position where I also told stories and gave information. The conversation became an opportunity for them to gain information that caused new thoughts and new feelings. In this way, where the roles shifted, I became a part of a new rhizome. We formed differences together as the talk developed into

unknown territories. I did not try to control these situations and turn them back to me being in the position of only asking questions. I argue that this way of thinking enabled us to loosen up about performing ethnographic conversations so that the method became more generous (Law, 2004). By generous I mean, that the method developed at the moment which also allowed us to explore other elements which were not planned beforehand. By allowing this looseness made spontaneous flights of thought possible as we created new perspectives.

Thinking with the rhizome in this project has inspired me to think about methods differently from the way I would have thought about this aspect of my study had I worked in a more 'traditional' manner. This is an assumption of course - but nevertheless how I have experienced it and thought about it. Thinking with the rhizome and the ability of the rhizome to make new connections in directions that were 'unpredictable' inspired me to connect different thoughts together with the people that I talked to during my fieldwork. This led me to try to form questions that involved both myself and the person I talked to in ways that would allow us to collaboratively imagine different actor's thoughts and feelings during the recruitment of a child to the academy. Thinking with the rhizome somehow opened new spaces and allowed us to wonder and talk about perspectives and elements connected to the recruitment process that inspired new ideas that had not occurred to us. Furthermore, situations that often started with me in the position of asking the questions ended in what could be thought of as an explorative conversation where none of us knew where we would end up. As the process evolved it came to resemble the characteristics of the 'rhizome'. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write:

Any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be.... A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, social sciences, and social struggles (p. 7).

I tried to connect children's rights to different elements in the recruitment. We tried to imagine ourselves in very many different actors life and tried to position ourselves in different geographical contexts. We often ended up talking about Uganda and Denmark as we shared and discussed why and how they could be different

just because of “a distance”. Often, we found out that they were not so difficult to talk about - we just had to talk a lot about them and create understandings that we did not know before we started. In other words, we had to seek and make new connections in order to establish new semiotic chains rhizomatically.

In the middle

I write this because I want to indicate a shift in content though arguing that there is no line between what I just wrote about Deleuze and Guattari and what will follow. The following section is entangled and connected to the previous which I will try to illustrate and explain. The concept of the always dynamic rhizome will connect to how I have thought about a post qualitative inquiry position which is characterized as “methodology-free” (St. Pierre, 2018, p. 1).

Post qualitative inquiry

What is post qualitative inquiry? In the following section, I will provide a brief description of post qualitative inquiry and how I have thought with it for my project. It is not my purpose to provide a full account of this type of inquiry. Instead, I aim to highlight what and how specific aspects of this approach have inspired my thinking about methodological issues in general and affected the ways in which I have employed particular methods to bring about the findings¹ of the present study. If the 'inventor' of post qualitative inquiry (research) should give an answer to the question about what post qualitative inquiry is, the answer would probably look similar to this:

Because post qualitative inquiry uses an ontology of immanence from poststructuralism as well as transcendental empiricism, it cannot be a social science research methodology with preexisting research methods and research practices a researcher can apply. In fact, it is methodology-free and so refuses the demands of "application." Recommendations for those interested in post qualitative inquiry include putting methodology aside and, instead, reading widely across philosophy, social theories, and the history of science and social science to find concepts that reorient thinking. Post qualitative inquiry encourages concrete, practical experimentation and the creation of the not yet instead of the repetition of what is (St. Pierre, 2018, p. 1).

In keeping with St. Pierre's explanation, post qualitative research can be described as the outcome of an ongoing critical discussion of the ways in which the human has been centred in the question of ontology (St. Pierre, 2018). Post qualitative research can be characterized as a position of decentring the human subject through fundamentally different ontological assumptions inspired by a posthumanist perspective which is radically different from the humanist standpoint that has dominated Western thinking for centuries². In place of humanism's anthropocentric focus on humans as special, enjoying a privileged position above everything

¹ Findings are in this project not to be confused with the idea that the researcher can collect data in a world where she is herself distant and wrap it up as 'findings'. The researcher is not privileged with a position where she can claim something to count more than something else (St. Pierre, 2018).

² Humanism has its roots in the enlightenment where man became interested in understanding the world through rational thinking. With humanism followed that "human" gained the privilege due to the fact that humans could think and make reason (Snaza & Weaver, 2015).

else that exists, posthumanism seeks to dethrone the human subject from its elevated position at the centre of all matters that matter so to speak. Furthermore, the posthumanist perspective which remains the primary catalyst for post qualitative research also entails a critical examination and ultimate refusal of the binary oppositions between subject and object, mind and body, culture and nature as well as numerous others that govern the common sense way we³ have typically understood and thought about ourselves in relation to the world around us.

A 'methodology-to-come'

Post qualitative inquiry refuses the demands for "application" (St. Pierre, 2018, p. 1) because such applications would indicate stability around concepts, the world and research. St. Pierre (2018) writes that post qualitative research is "methodology-free" (p. 9) as its proponents deny that it is just another methodology which is different from traditional methodologies. Indeed, according to St. Pierre (2018):

there can be no post qualitative research methodology or research methods, no post qualitative research designs, no post qualitative research practices, no post qualitative data or methods of data collection or methods of data analysis (p. 10, emphasis in original).

Therefore, it is not possible for post qualitative researchers to talk about or claim that methodology *is like this* or *that* because it would contradict the underlying philosophical ideas about the unstable nature of all concepts including the concepts of method, methodology, and theory as well as those that are commonly used to describe how these features of research function depending on the kind of research in question. According to Deleuze and Guattari, just like every other concept, these concepts are inherently unstable, always already in a process of becoming.

³ By this 'we' I especially refer to researchers and every type of research. From a post qualitative research position there is no idea of the researcher being distant from the field or the topic from where she can describe, explain and interpret the world objectively.

Again, post qualitative inquiry is different each time it appears, produced by different contingent and unpredictable forces; that is, the conditions of its emergence cannot be repeated because they disappear immediately, and what one post qualitative inquirer "does" cannot serve as a model for others.

Lather (2013) writes that post qualitative research can be viewed as a "methodology-to-come" where "we begin to do it differently wherever we are in our projects" (p. 635). This means that post qualitative research cannot be looked up in a textbook because an attempt to do so would be a simplification and against its philosophical position where nothing can be represented or copied. Because post qualitative inquiry is characterized as a 'methodology-to-come' it is impossible for me to follow a specific pre-planned path from "beginning to end". Post qualitative researchers are advised to seek out different spaces and create new ways of doing their research and not dwell with the illusion that research methodology and methods can be stabilized (St. Pierre, 2018; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). This is essential for my project and how it developed. Hence, I was frequently inspired by the work and methods of others, but I never thought of their work as something that I could seamlessly copy, adapt, and apply for my own purposes.

What characterizes authors who are inspired by the ideas behind post qualitative research/inquiry is the language they choose to use. These authors typically choose a language that always describes processes, objects, and events as being in a state of 'becoming something else'. Authors like St. Pierre (2018), Law (2014) and Kuntz (2015) choose words that indicate movement and accept the premise that the very words they use can mean multiple things depending on the connections they make with other words, the topic and the context which creates rhizomes, that is a language that stresses the importance of the dynamic, movement, and creativity. I try to apply this 'style' in my writing as I try to create perspectives through different actors who uses different language as I intend to illustrate the complexities surrounding children's rights during the recruitment of young boys. Also, I try to illustrate how my use of theory is nothing else than stable through a

language where i use words that stresses movement and creativity. This means that I use terms as things/tools 'to think with' while trying to connect them with in ways that create movement and room for the reader to make new connections.

Post qualitative research: A call for more responsibility

Does this make post qualitative research as 'methodology-to-come' (Lather, 2013, p. 635) to some kind of ultimate relativism due to its instability and decentring of the human subject ontologically? And does it make researchers, humans, less responsible as they now do not inhabit the centre of the world? Do post qualitative researchers demand a 'new Humanity' (Braidotti, 2018, p. xxiv)? The short answer to this would be: No.

In fact, I argue that post qualitative research is a serious call for humans (researchers), to take more responsibility through an increased awareness of our relationality and connectedness to non-humans, inorganic objects, people, horses, children's rights, and sport, as everything exist rhizomatically at the same flattened surface (Deleuze & Guattari, 1984; St. Pierre, 2018). Braidotti (2018) writes:

The challenge today is how to transform, or deterritorialise, the humannonhuman interaction in pedagogical practice, so as to intervene in, but not be over-coded or assimilated by, the fast-moving flows of data-mining by cognitive capitalism. How to bypass the dialectics of otherness, secularizing the concept of human nature and the life that animates it[?] . . . The field of post human scholarship is not aiming at anything like a consensus about a new 'Humanity', but it gives us a frame for the actualisation of the many different ways of becoming post human. It actualises multiple missing people, whose marginalised knowledge is the breeding ground for possible futures (p. xxiv).

I argue that a production of different perspectives from Danish and Ugandan coaches, staff members of the academy, family members and the director can become the breeding ground for new possible futures but also a general discussion of what it would mean to have Human Rights and Children's Rights as these might also cause a marginalization of people. Though I would never characterize the people that I met as 'missing people' or 'marginalized' as I refuse to use a language where African people (here: Ugandans) often are talked about as 'marginalized' or 'the others'. Yet, within the existing literature, the focus is less on these people and their

perspectives on children's rights when it is thought with the recruitment of a young boy. So, in that way, it is an 'actualization of multiple missing people' due to the lack of literature that has aimed to make it a possible breeding ground for knowledge. Arguing that post qualitative research opens up new spaces and creates possibilities for researchers to become more responsible in their fields and practices is central for why I have chosen to do and think with post qualitative research.

Furthermore, being aware of the connectedness of humans and nonhumans made it possible to become more connected to children's rights and use them as a 'responsible place for departure'. With that, I do not claim that children's rights were the 'best solution' I could possibly think of but it existed as a responsible place to take departure from and explore how different perspectives and different people were connected to them and most importantly how they differentiated from different people's perspectives on children's rights.

I thought children's rights as something that existed in rhizomes at a flattened non-hierarchical plane and I thought following Foucault (1983) that "we always have something to do" (p. 231) so I tried to create new perspectives and discussions with my participants without using the children's rights principles as a measure for "right" and "wrong" practices. Instead, I tried to think critically about children's rights in an exploration of how different perspectives could appear in the context of a Danish academy operating in Uganda. Was it a bad place for departure? No, I do not think so, but a difficult place for departure, nevertheless it was a place for departure that made it possible to resist what Kuntz (2015) mention as "students to sit on the fence when it comes to questions of politics and research" (p. 13). An engagement with post qualitative rhizomatic research encouraged me to jump down from the fence and move away from methodological fixation and instead involve myself in as many perspectives and create as many differences and dilemmas as possible and that way be working for the possibility of social change (Kuntz, 2015).

This way of thinking brought me into some speculations about how I wanted to perform my fieldwork. Should I categorize what I saw, who I talked to, where I was physically located, how I talked, how I felt, how it made me feel, what it made me think of, how I took notes, how I creates discussions together with multiple people and actors etc.? Should I prepare semi-structured interview guides with pre-planned questions related to different children's rights and bring it into the field?

No - I tried to move away from specific categories for methods such as interview and observation and the rules that would follow if I entered such categories. They would limit me. So, I did not categorize what I was doing, I did not strive to set up conversations in a certain order in specific places. I tried to stay at the academy as much as possible, more or less 3 weeks, engage myself in whatever I could and have discussions and conversations when something appeared to me and made me unstable and curious. I had conversations in packed buses, at restaurants, at bars, in private homes wearing a robe and drinking a cup of tea early in the morning, at the academy office, at the football field - none of these encounters followed guidelines - except that we started from talking about recruitment of children. That is actually not true, sometimes we talked about the tea that was made of strong homegrown ginger with lemon from the woman next door sweetened up with honey from the town while we casually shared perspectives on how much a young boy was worth in Ugandan Shillings. Bitter and sweet so to say...

Each conversation and each thing that I did during the fieldwork was an act upon life (May, 2005) and every step in the process of doing research is a new event and not a repetition of another (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; St. Pierre, 2018). And thinking with the fundamental idea that nothing can be repeated made me try to go beyond that I had to stabilize the conversations and the environment they took place in. Different sittings actually invited to different conversations – I did not strive to standardize where my conversations took place because it then would limit bias or something like that. We worked in the materials that surrounded us and

was in that way also formed by where we found ourselves to be. The bus trips created conversations, so did the tea, so did the grasshoppers when we were setting at the football fields grass of rhizomes.

Non-representation and language

Post qualitative research is non-linear and non-representational (St. Pierre, 2013). St. Pierre (2013) writes that 'representation' assumes two things: that there is a primary reality to be found, a reality out there, and that language is able to represent reality accurately. But language is not a mirror of a reality out-there in post qualitative research and language is not stable (Deleuze & Guatarri, 1987; St. Pierre, 2018) – it is dynamic and changing. Language is as everything else and as Le Grange (2018b) writes: "All things, even physical objects such as desks and computers are in-becoming – rocks, human beings as well as systems of thought and language do not have fixity but are always changing" (p. 45). Science, human methods, "is based on the belief that language (surface, secondary) can be used in such a way that it does not distort the truths scientific practice has discovered in the real world (depth, primary)" (St. Pierre, 2013, p. 649).

Following Deleuze and Guattari (1987) in post-qualitative research language and reality exist together on the same surface, and are both unstable concepts in the process of becoming something else. Language and reality do not exist in a hierarchy and this means that I cannot claim any position as a researcher who has a language that can create stability – rather I try to work with the premise that language is in movement, in change, becoming something else as we use it, speak or write. An example of this is how children's rights are understood in relation to running an academy. In the many discussions with the director of the academy, we created different perspectives where he argued that the right to education and a secure childhood (Article XX) would justify that the academy recruited the young boys even though that the consequence would be that the boy would see his family less during a year. Justifying actions and processes through arguments of providing and following children's rights by the academy also meant that other children's rights were less prioritized.

The children's rights, so to say, became a quality mark, but they caused new dilemmas as other rights were ignored. And who was in the position of power to choose which rights to follow and which to ignore? The academy. Which leads to the question of whether an academy should be in the position to choose which rights to follow and which not to follow?

Post qualitative 'data'

Post qualitative research invites us to think differently with the 'production' of 'data' and 'data analysis' (St. Pierre, 2018). And in general, think with those two concepts differently. Data is not something that we collect from a world that exists out-there and, data is not isolated from self. Data and data analysis is no longer the same in post qualitative research and, it wants us to take a turn away from the banality of coding and categorising that characterize conventional qualitative research (St. Pierre, 2018).

Working from a post qualitative perspective is a turn away from 'traditional' ways of thinking about what is often labelled as 'findings', 'themes', 'categories' and 'results' which would lead to the underpinning assumption that a researcher is in the powerful position to select data which is worthy of the label as "important data" (St. Pierre, 2018). Following the ideas of post qualitative research, the researcher is not in the position to recognize concepts in the data that she collected in a reality 'outside' and then "have property to organize them in internal relations under a specific concept" (p. 5) which makes me avoid the danger of writing 'final conclusions' and position myself as a researcher who has the power to say, 'this is like that' where St. Pierre writes:

conventional humanist qualitative methodology uses this approach, primarily looking for resemblance and similarities in data; for example, this is like that, so it fits within this general theme or pattern, and/or we can use this code or concept to label similar things in actual states of affairs. Identity rather than difference is the focus of that approach; consequently, thought is "filled with no more than an image of itself, one in which it recognizes itself the more it recognizes things" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 138). (p. 5).

As written in the quote I do not seek 'identities', fixed labels, for what I write about and the concepts that I think within this project. First of all, I did not transcribe, code and analyse conversations or discussions that

happened - I recorded one discussion due to a wish from the person I talked to, besides that, I didn't do it - because I am not looking for any patterns in conversations where I could write up a story and conclude "this is like that" due to many people stating the same across many conversations or due to that the person said it several times. Looking for patterns, codes and themes would be a simplification, and simply not possible from a post qualitative perspective, as each event, each conversation and discussion would be different from the other as a premise. I was not seeking to label specific children's rights to the recruitment processes, I was rather trying to use them as a concept for creating different perspectives in my discussions and conversations - to create another perspective, another future. I wanted to avoid a 'circular structure' where I would end up at the same destination as I departed from - stating "this is like that", which I do not believe is what is needed in a field which is complex, dynamic, and reported as being a potential exploitive environment for children.

Post qualitative 'methods'

Thinking with post qualitative research makes us recognize that methods are performative – because methods unfold through "intra-actions with the world" (Le Grange, 2018, p. 8). Methods are not just something that we can pick from a handbook and expect access to the world out-there, methods create realities and "if this is the case, methods are always political, and this raises the question of what realities we want to create" (Law, 2004, s. 1). This statement by John Law (2004) makes a very important illustration of how I have thought about methods and how to perform my fieldwork as I tried to ask and raise the question "what realities do we want to create when we recruit young boys?" I asked myself that question but I also used it as a question in the fieldwork as a catalyst for opening up new conversations and thoughts. I used the question together with Deleuze and Guattari's question of how might one live? in other variations and connected to children's rights. Variations inspired by John Law and Deleuze and Guattari opened discussions and created spaces where we imagined how a better world could take form with children's rights. "How might we live with children's rights and academy football?", "What realities do we want to create with football and children's rights?" and "What

realities do we want our children to live and develop in?" were questions created during the discussions. I cannot highlight enough how useful I found these questions as they removed elements of 'judging' each other's statements and allowed us to be creative. We became playful with language and we allowed ourselves to have moments of hope for another future where we did not necessarily think a price tag on children's back as an opportunity. I tried to act with the idea that "posthumanism calls into question the 'normal' use of many words and concepts and invites playthinking and courageous experimentation" (Murriss & Haynes, 2018, p. 4).

Post qualitative criteria: How to evaluate differences

I will repeat St. Pierre (2018) when she wrote that she wanted:

... to be perfectly clear here—there can be no post qualitative research methodology or research methods, no post qualitative research designs, no post qualitative research practices, no post qualitative data or methods of data collection or methods of data analysis, no representations of a stable, sensory "lived" world, no post qualitative findings, no post qualitative research report format because, again, post qualitative inquiry never is, it never stabilizes (p. 8).

Nor can there be the typical markers used to judge traditional social science research (St. Pierre, 2018). I have followed completely different markers for this project inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (1994) that embrace intensification of life that enable "possibilities of movements and intensities, so as once again to give birth to new modes of existence" (p. 74) as well as to "people that do not yet exist" (p. 109). St. Pierre (2018) writes that post qualitative researchers look for and affirm novelty and difference and use categories like "Interesting, Remarkable, or Important" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 82).

I have tried to think and work with these categories in almost every aspect of my project. From fieldwork done in a way where I embraced differences and tried to create discussions which were interesting for the people who participated in an extremely important subject: Children's rights. To push my texts to become so different that a reader would find them to be remarkable. And not just this casual thought that could strike a

reader's mind of "oh, this is interesting and remarkable" – I intend to leave the reader shivering, surprised, angry, frustrated and harmed in a way that would create radical new ideas about the recruitment of children to professional football academies. In doing so I have followed St. Pierre (2018) and Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) categories and:

You can only critique a work from within its paradigm. It makes no sense to apply foundational–positivistic criteria to a poem, or to performance ethnography. In turn, performance criteria should not be applied to a piece of statistical analysis. The two projects rest on different politics of representation. To repeat: differences in interpretive criteria must be honored. (Denzin, 2010, p. 41)

This seems rather logical: that a poem makes very little sense to evaluate from a positivistic perspective and vice versa. For example, I have not mentioned (nor did I actually count) how many conversations I had during the fieldwork which is to be found in much ethnographic research by writing something like "Overall, I conducted 50 biographical and expert interviews" (Ungruhe, 2016, p. 1770) or "The material presented in this article is taken from in-depth interviews conducted with 11 Nigerian women footballers" (Engh & Agergaard, 2015, p. 981). These studies worked from different traditional markers for quality where it is believed that transparency about the amount of data is important for the overall judgement of the quality of the study. Where data is 'collected', in what time, in what period and for how long is not something which will increase the quality of my research (St. Pierre, 2018). I did not follow such quantitative markers in my ethnographic work. From a position in post qualitative research, I do not argue that I can justify my writings because I have spent a certain amount of time at the academy. That is not me saying that the amount of time spent at the academy does not matter, because I believe that more time spent at the academy would have raised new questions and thought, but I cannot use my time spent and how many people I talked to as a marker for quality as it has trails back to positivistic qualitative research where numbers mattered (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

Critical Ethnography

In the following section, I will try to explain and illustrate how I thought about method(s). The text will focus on the method(s) that developed during the fieldwork (St. Pierre, 2018; Law, 2004) and how I thought of 'writing' as a method for analysis (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Writing this section is particular difficult as it could be expected of me to write up a 'complete summary' of 'what I did' – in other words, it relies on the idea of me being capable of 'representation' which I explained is not an idea that follows my post qualitative research position (St. Pierre, 2018) or Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical ideas. But it is nevertheless the opportunity that I see as available for me in this particular master thesis where I have to engage critically about 'my own' actions. What is very important to mention in this small introduction is that I did not plan my fieldwork in detail – but I had ideas and principles that I wanted to share with people I talked to as I engaged in many different conversations with many different people.

I remember that I said this out loud to people before the fieldwork: "When I get to the academy, I will no longer hold back my opinions, thoughts, feelings, and perspectives. I will tell them if something makes me wonder. I will tell them if something makes me stutter in my own thoughts. I will react and be sensible if I feel something is wrong." This could be described as stumbling:

What a breakdown is: An experience of stumbling, which causes a situation where inquiry is meant to result in a regaining of one's balance. If we allow ourselves to be sensitive to the strangeness of the world, there are numerous things to stumble upon: In conversations, media books, advertising, consumer objects, architecture, and everyday episodes and situations. Usually, these are not simply given as "data" but, at certain times, they may cause us to stumble – and thereby become data (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 724).

I went to the academy with the idea of being a responsible researcher (Kuntz, 2015) where I wanted to interact, sensitively, with as many things as possible because I believed that at one point such an approach would make me lose balance (Brinkmann, 2014). 'Responsible' understood as I did not want to sit passively and observe if

children's rights were violated and neither would I keep quiet if something disturbed my balance organ. I promised myself that I would be true to who 'I am' so I could walk away with my head held high well aware that I would not be the same after this fieldwork – I would as anything else become something else (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

I went to the academy inspired by what Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) describe as a Critical Ethnographer where I emphasized being confrontational of elements in the recruitment practise that created dilemmas about children's rights. Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) write that "critical must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or public sphere within the society" (p. 305). And I kept Denzin's (2010) words in mind that "the qualitative researcher is not an objective, politically neutral observer who stands outside and above the study of the social world. Rather, the researcher is historically and locally situated within the very processes being studied" (p. 20). Denzin emphasizes that I as a researcher is not outside and above my fieldwork – I am connected to it, rhizomatically a part of the fieldwork and never able to claim objectivity. I thought of myself as an ethnographer (a person) who should advocate for children's rights and use them and myself actively in the fieldwork where I wanted to create perspectives and discussions with the participants. I tried to think with what Kuntz (2015) describes as risky activism:

We must risk ourselves if we are to truly engage in activist work; we must generate new ways of becoming. Through participating in new ways of knowing we come to engage in new ways of being—the intrarelation of it all continues as methodological activists agitate for new material possibilities not currently encountered (Kuntz, 2015, p. 29).

This risky approach was different from each conversation during the fieldwork depending on who I was interacting with. But what do we must risk ourselves if we are to truly engage in activist work mean? What is possible to risk? Who are "ourselves"? What does Kuntz advise researchers to do? I turned the questions and statements towards me. I must risk myself if I am to truly engage in activist work. What is possible for me to risk? Who am I? What does Kuntz advise me to do? I do not know if Kuntz (2015) had someone like me in

mind when he wrote that piece of text – but I think it is very important to imagine if I could be the student (researcher) that he aimed for. Nevertheless, as mentioned, I was determined to confront El Cambio Academy and especially the director/founder with my opinions and reflections. I thought of this approach as an act of activism. But did I risk anything? If I did – what did I risk? I remember that I thought of this confrontational approach as being risky for myself. I was willing to throw myself into these discussions with my head and heart first.

But when I think about it again, I did not risk myself at any time – because I was true to myself and open (as much as possible) about that the researcher (me) is not some objective character that is politically neutral in and during the fieldwork (Denzin, 2010). I would have risked myself if I did NOT follow a confrontational activist style. If I had observed passively and not searched for discussions where we deeply disagreed on El Cambio Academy's recruitment practise – then I would have risked myself. So what did I risk when I did not risk myself? I risked my research. I risked the opportunity to do my fieldwork at El Cambio Academy because the director could have reacted in a way where he did not wish to see me again.

In the relation between El Cambio Academy, the director, and me, my master thesis was what I could risk, it was my most valuable thing I could put at risk. I did not have anything else as valuable. Then it can be argued that the master thesis is not a lot to put at risk? But for me it was everything. I felt that I put everything at the table and risked my future as a researcher.

How did it play out during the fieldwork especially with the director?

I was critical. I was seeking confrontations. I created discussions. I would not obey. I was stubborn. I was maybe also provocative. We agreed many times to disagree. And I believe the reason why we could say "let's agree to disagree" was due to that we were both aware of the purpose of the discussions. We were both interested in different perspectives and their differences, though we argued for different things, we still kept

on talking, knowing that we created a space where it was allowed to use feelings, imagination, thoughts, and vocabulary that was strong. We tried to create what St. Pierre (2018) refers to as the 'not-yet' (p. 2). I will give an example from a conversation:

I explained to the director that I saw tendencies in El Cambio Academy being a colonial phenomenon that took advantage of Ugandan families and young boys who played football. He asked how I could think something like that. Then I showed him their website and told him that was also how they appeared to me in their practice of recruitment:

El Cambio Academy website:

"Why did we choose Africa?

1. African families need help to survive.
2. Africans love soccer.
3. Africans have a natural soccer physiques.
4. Africans want to work hard to achieve success.
5. Africa has a huge potential that has not yet been developed." (ECA web, 2019):

Then I told him, that as El Cambio Academy is placed in Uganda then he cannot generalize across a whole continent – he could not even do it across a nation. Then I told him how stigmatizing it was to state that Africans need help to survive – as if they could not survive without help from him and without his help they could not develop their huge potential? I said that what was written was stigmatizing, patronizing, generalizing and that it was raci... And then he interrupted me and said: "it is actually racist, but that is not our intentions, we genuinely want to help".

It was risky. I took a risk claiming that El Cambio Academy was racist in its statements. I was direct and did not avoid what I thought and what I thought I could argue for. But I remembered to be polite, humble and I paid a lot of attention to my way of explaining things so I did not make the same mistake as I argued El Cambio Academy to be; generalizing and stigmatizing. The discussions were in this way risky and dangerous as we were moving in spaces where we both felt extremely connected and related to the topic. The director had created this academy from zero and claimed to do this for the children and I was creating a project where I also claimed to do it for the children. We were both working for the same – but we wanted to do it in different ways.

As the director and I discussed, I was experimenting with post qualitative ideas and philosophical ideas from Deleuze and Guattari with the main goal of creating new futures and better environments for children to live in. I have to highlight that I did not experiment for the sake of being experimental (Denzin, 2016). I felt, and I believed in a critical activist approach to the fieldwork because I found that necessary if different perspectives on children's rights were to be created. Do I then claim that this approach was and is the absolute best way to engage with an academy and their views on children's rights? No, I will never claim it to be the best, but I will advocate for it as being an approach among many more that has to be invented, experimented and thought within research concerned about recruitment of young boys and their rights. I tried to follow what Mason et al., (2019) called for when they advised researchers to "place children at the heart of research design" (p. 15) and stimulate a debate upon the researcher's use of different methodologies, styles, and approaches. And according to Denzin (2016):

there remains a pressing need to invent a reflexive form of social science writing that turns ethnography and experimental literary texts back onto one another. The goal is not to be experimental for the sake of being experimental. The goal is to change the world through the way we write about it (p. 90).

And this is what this project is about, creating new perspectives that could change the world both through writing and through the fieldwork I did at El Cambio Academy in Masaka.

Multiple method(s)

The way the director and I communicated was different from how I communicated with staff members, coaches, and volunteers at the academy. I approached them differently due to the relationship we had. Some I had never met before so I was more careful and paid more attention to create a comfortable space for us to be in. I was at the academy for an amount of time that allowed me to do things slowly. I was not in a rush to have discussions – I allowed myself to be a patient ethnographer who slowly build connections to the environment where I was living.

An example that shows the differences in my critical activist approach was my conversations with two Ugandan coaches who also worked as scouts for the academy. We were sitting behind the academy at some small rocks. We had met a few times before when I was doing my last project in 2018, but we had never actually been in a 'setup' like this. I asked them if they could explain to me how a recruitment process happened and what they found to be difficult during a process.

I paid careful attention to what vocabulary I used during these conversations, how I listened, and how I curiously asked questions. I was still a critical activist but in a slow and patient way. I wanted to avoid that I appeared as being the 'person who knew better' and in that way, judge their work, their life, by advocating for how some of their choices conflicted with the principles of children's rights or the other way around: how children's rights conflicted with their choices. I was not there to blame them or end up at final destinations where they were right and I was wrong. I had a humble approach, I felt honoured to sit and talk with two strangers who wanted to share their knowledge. They were interested in listening to me and my perspectives as well. They were as curious and critical as me, they asked me questions and were interested in why I found

my way to El Cambio Academy in Masaka. In relation to their curiosity, I found it useful to tell about my method(s) – to create a space where I told about the purpose of my project. It became an important part of my method, to tell about my ideas about method(s). I invited them to think with my 'method(s)' and actually develop the method(s) together. I explained how I was interested in their stories and their feelings but also in their hopes and thoughts for another way of recruiting children. From a departure about method(s) and this project's purpose, we made new connections rhizomatically, because we allowed us to imagine 'the new' and 'the not-yet' (St. Pierre, 2018). We slowly began to do 'playthinking' (Murriss & Haynes, 2018) using language as what Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) writes as the 'centrepiece' (p. 961) where language did not "reflect" reality but rather produced meaning and created different social realities (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

An example from those conversations:

It is a complicated process. We are working for the academy. The academy and the director only want to recruit the biggest talents. We are working for the best and most organized academy in Uganda. When we approach another Ugandan coach, who has the boy at his team, he sees an opportunity to earn money. He is stubborn to talk to. He wants the academy's money because he knows that it is owned by a muzungu (a white person). He knows that El Cambio is financially strong because it is an international project. Every coach in Uganda knows that El Cambio compensates for talent if they wish to recruit him.

"What do you mean with compensation?" I asked.

You know. People here want money. The coach has a boy, a talented boy, that he also depends on for his team to win games – so he wants money. Of course, he wants money. But the coach is dragging this process out. He does not answer calls, and when he does, he will not allow us to talk to the boy's parents.

"Why won't he allow you to talk to the parents?"

You see. In Uganda, parents give the responsibility of the boy to coaches, because the coach has promised and convinced the parents that the coach can find schools and scholarships for the boy because he is a good football player. In Uganda, many boys get free scholarships because schools want to participate and win the regional and national school tournaments - a lot of prestige. So the coach is the caretaker of the boy, the parents trust him, they are happy as long as they do not have to pay the school fees themselves. But, the coach will not allow us to talk to the parent, because then he is afraid that we might convince the parents to let the boy go to El Cambio.

So what we do. We give him 1.000.000 UG Shillings and then he signs a contract that he handover the boy to us, then we go to the parents with the coach – and then the coach tells the parents that he has found a better alternative for their boy.

"Excuse me, so you pay the coach 1.000.000 Shillings (1800 DKK), for a 7-year-old boy and you do not tell the parent about it?"

Yes, that is what the director wants us to do. Sometimes the coaches want to bargain but the director has a principle of 1.000.000 Shillings. But I do actually not know if that is allowed. Is it allowed Lasse, what do you do in Denmark?

"I do not do that in Denmark, but I am also not involved in football like that in Denmark. What I do know is that it is not allowed to involve money when you work with children. Because, as you see, the motives from the coach changes, he thinks about earning money."

Hmm, yeah, but you see, in Uganda people also need to earn money for their families. The coach might be poor. And we are only doing as the director tells us to do.

"I do really understand that it is difficult. But how would you feel, if you trust a person with the life of your son, and then the person convinced you that the boy should be sent to another place, but you did not know as a parent that he might only convince you since he got a lot of money?"

I would be disappointed as a parent. But Lasse, you have to understand, that my family is also depending on the money that I earn here at the academy. I do not know what I could do differently.

As the coaches of El Cambio Academy and I talked more and more about the money involved I told them "I do understand that financial motives can make people think of their own situation and make people chose profit and their family's situation. I do understand that the caretaker would be in a dilemma. But I do not think it is alright to leave the parents outside, and I do especially not find it alright that the boy turns into an object who is in the middle between the academy and the caretaker. And I do not say this because this is in Uganda, I would find it problematic if this was happening in Denmark, Spain, Argentina, Mexico, China or in the USA."

I tried to 'playthink' (Murriss & Haynes, 2018) together with the coaches as we imagined how the parents would feel and react to the fact that they were not aware of the money involved. We tried to do this with other actors who were involved in the process. In that way, we tried to make everyday categories and assumptions problematic (Down, Smyth & Robinson, 2018) as we made connections across children's rights and different motives that each actor could have. It was not just me who asked probing questions, the coaches were also in some way interested in unsettling underpinning understandings of my perspectives which led to an exchange of perspectives in a way that I did not imagine, to begin with. It sometimes felt as we were all ethnographers, where we investigated things together and helped each other to think differently and position ourselves differently when we thought about the boys.

We wanted to become unsettled, and it felt as we were seeking alternative positions to open new spaces for the boys who were *in the middle* of the recruitment process:

As critical ethnographers, we openly position ourselves as advocates for the least powerful and most marginalised young people in society (Smyth & McInerney, 2013). We deliberately ask more probing questions capable of unsettling some deeply entrenched assumptions and practices underpinning the existing social order. Our intent is to make everyday categories, assumptions, and practices problematic for the purpose of revealing unequal power relations, whether in schooling or the economy, whilst advancing socially just alternatives (Down, Smyth, & Robinson, 2018, p. 25).

These conversations were actually risky – because it was very easy to fall into the trap of pure understanding for a difficult situation and acknowledge that they were in a position where they could not do much. Here I felt that I could risk myself because I found it difficult to accuse anybody involved besides El Cambio Academy as an institution. It was a difficult task for me to tell the Ugandan coaches that I disagreed with how they practised the recruitment – because they had the opportunity to tell the parents, but at the same time I knew that they could not tell the parents because that was not how they were told to do the job by the academy. But as these conversations developed, we also became more aware of that we were not attacking each other personally, but we were discussing differences and that we needed our different perspectives to create new ways of knowing (Kuntz, 2015). I explained these reflections, and I explained to them how afraid I was as coming out as a white man who knew what was 'the best' because that was never my intention. I felt that they appreciated this honesty. And I wanted to show them that respect of being straight forward – because they knew the purpose of my project, they knew I had opinions, and they knew that I might create dilemmas for the sake of provoking them a bit. The important point is, that we knew that we could learn from a conversation 'without filter'.

These kinds of conversation took days to construct and situate as we were sometimes talking for a short time while we walked to the football pitch and other times we sat down and agreed to discuss. I tried to involve myself as much as possible as I wanted to be in a position where I could criticize the system from inside:

The main issue, one that Derrida and legions of deconstructionists, feminists, and postcolonial thinkers devoted considerable attention to, is that it is impossible to think, criticize, and write about a system except from inside it. One must always inhabit the discourses one wishes to throw into question (Snaza & Weaver, 2015, p. 3).

To analyse: Writing and thinking

I will briefly explain how I have thought of 'analysis' in this project. To analyse is to write (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). And I used writing as a method of analysis by:

using writing to think; this is, I wrote my way into particular spaces I could not have occupied by sorting data with a computer program or by analytic induction. This was rhizomatic work (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) in which I made accidental and fortuitous connections I could not foresee or control (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 970).

I did not limit analysis to conventional strategies of coding and then sorting codes into categories to end up with grouped themes (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; St. Pierre, 2018). "Thought happened in writing" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 970) and I believed that if I used writing as a method something new would appear to be thought during that process. Practically this took place as field notes and texts I wrote after conversations and discussions. I could not control these field notes, and I did not limit my notes to circle around specific themes or theories – they were allowed to unfold as they wanted and as Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) writes “I doubt I could have thought such a thought by thinking alone” (p. 970).

And it is thinking or writing in this way that breaks down the distinction in conventional qualitative inquiry between data collection and data analysis – one more assault to the structure. Both happen at once. As data are collected in the writing – as the researcher thinks/writes... (p. 970)

Analysis is here and there, folding and unfolding into new territories, and cannot be separated from any other process of this project. In post qualitative research any attempt to separate ‘data production’ from ‘data analysis’ is absurd (St. Pierre, 2018) and actually irrelevant (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) because analysis is writing and thinking and it "is a field of play where anything can happen – and does" (p. 971). Do not

misunderstand 'a field of play' for a place full of joy and roses (it can be). But it is important for me to highlight that many of my ideas happened through painful and lonesome writings. Pieces of text in a chaotic 'system' in my notebooks that served as a place where I could 'let go' of my thoughts and frustrations. These texts do not appear here in the project 'physically' as 'original' texts, but they have formed and inspired me to write different texts afterwards. So, they do appear because they are connected to what is written in these pages. Post qualitative researchers are advised and encouraged to invent their own writing for their own projects, as there is no model for each project since each researcher and study is different (St. Pierre, 2018). 'A field of play' and 'experimental writing' is nevertheless what is soon to follow, and again, I do not experiment for the sake of being experimental (Denzin, 2016), I do it in the attempt to create new futures for young boys who are related to football academies.

I imagine that this way of thinking about 'analysis' could be a bit abstract. It might be. Analysis is a blurry, messy and messed up process because it is different from analytic models known from conventional qualitative research such as the 'thematic analysis' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Applying a strategic like a thematic analysis paints a picture of the process as being linear. Post qualitative research does not accept an application of such strategy. Instead St. Pierre (2018) argues, that since every research is new and different it requires different 'models' of analysis.

In between and before something-to-come

I want to use this section to mention once again that I have thought with post qualitative research and its refusal of following specific 'demands for application' (St. Pierre, 2018). I do not claim to tell one single Truth, and I have not followed 'traditional' markers to ensure the quality of this project. Instead, as mentioned, I strive to make my texts Important, Interesting and Remarkable (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). I will in the following sections try to illustrate the complexities that I found important to write about when the recruitment of children to El Cambio Academy was connected and thought with children's rights. I will again mention that I am inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) in terms of that the reader should not search for the author's (my) opinions and fight for an understanding or a desire to comprehend. The reader should not seek a single deeper meaning but instead accepts that multiplicities is a premise for reality and so it is for my texts. I wish that the reader would follow the development of creating different perspectives in the field and develop her own as well. I wish that the text would be met from a perspective of wonder and with a focus on how the text could be thought differently with. What differences does it create? What does it make me think of? And how does it make me feel? These could be relevant questions to keep in mind as the pages run out.

Dear Diary: The Director

I have now spoken to the student who is here at the academy, and I cannot believe how he can think the way that he is. Yeah okay, I will admit that our information and descriptions on the website could be written differently and that they are too generalizing of the Ugandan people. Yet I would still argue that they need help to develop. He is the only person that I have ever met who is so critical about what we are doing here at El Cambio. Is he blind to what we are doing for these boys? We help them realise a better future. We provide opportunities. We provide security. We give them eight years of free education. We provide them with food. We can help them reach their full potential, something that nobody else in Uganda or East Africa is even able to do! Why is he such a pain in the ass? Is he just acting as the devil's advocate? That student is the only person who has said what he is saying. The only one. None of our guests, not a single person in Denmark and not one person in Uganda has ever told me the things that he has. El Cambio Academy is a place for children to grow up in a safe place. El Cambio Academy is a place where the boys can get better opportunities. We are the best academy in Uganda. I do not understand how he can think differently. I am, of course, a biased narrator, but I would vehemently argue that what we are doing is for the best of the child. It is in the DNA of El Cambio to always think of the child no matter what we are doing. I am here on this earth to make a difference for these children, and I believe the setup we have is absolutely unique due to the combination of being an NGO who works professionally, creates an elite environment for the best talents and at the same time nurture talents. I don't really get why the student has a problem with that, or why he questioned me so much about only selecting the best? I do not have a problem with giving them the best and most unique opportunity; I think there are many NGOs who focus on the broad spectrum of children, and at El Cambio, we chose another group of children – we chose the ones who are best at football. I think they deserve to be in a place like ours. The boys have the right to be offered a place where they can develop and we, at El Cambio, can nurture talents like them!

El Cambio Academy press conference

Thank you all for coming. We would like to welcome a new member to our El Cambio Academy family. I will introduce the talent, shortly – but first I would like to tell you a story about how this happened.

We saw this player during a weekend tournament at Lugogo Stadium in Kampala where he showed some amazing skills. Despite the fact that he is just seven years old, we were amazed by his touch, his speed and his personality on the pitch. He was a real natural talent. We started making contact with his coach and showed our interest in this player. The coach was invited here to El Cambio Academy to see the academy and our program. The coach was so impressed with what he saw and understood that El Cambio Academy was a better solution for the player – we could provide the setup which is required to nurture such a talent to the next level and provide a network to Europe if that day should come.

Question from a journalist: Did you give anything to the coach?

Thanks for asking that question, it is true that we give compensation to the coach and his academy. We provide football equipment as a way of saying “thank you” but also because we want to help others. We give footballs, cones, and clothes as we believe the best way to development is by helping whoever we can. It is vital for us to sustain and develop an excellent relationship to potential satellite academies where we can spread knowledge through football and reach many communities and make a sustainable and positive difference.

This leads me back to the newest member of our family. Besides being a fantastic football talent, he is also a boy with an extremely impoverished background. So personally, I am thrilled that we, in fact, saved this boy from growing up in a rural area and we will do our best here at El Cambio Academy to make him feel safe and part of something bigger. We will make sure that this talent will be aware of his responsibility of giving back to his community so that he will inspire his community and become a role model for other children.

Dear Diary: Ethnographer

I just came back from El Cambio Academy's press conference where the director introduced a 'new member of the family'. I am glad that I am in my own room now at the hotel because I could not stand it anymore. I was sitting far back, behind all the journalist who was sitting there with their cameras, pens and papers. The director even managed to get national TV reporters present. What a complete circus! What a lie!

How can they have the audacity to claim that they have saved a child, who was already in school, already in an academy, already had a coach and a family? The visions of NGOs have turned into a cover story. It is bullshit! They want to recruit 7-10-year-old boys who are the best in their eyes with the most significant potential to reach a professional level. Talking about El Cambio Academy as a family? What is going on? How can you recruit boys, effectively stealing them from their families, and think that you are creating a family? You take them away from their families, you take the boys out of their school where they had their entire group of friends, maybe they had brothers and sisters at that school and then you claim to create a new family; it is nonsense to me. Can you believe it?

Dear Dear Diary, how on earth can this place still run? Taking a boy out of his normal life, it is not healthy for a kid, and then placed among strangers in an elite environment... Welcome to the family...

I feel like I am watching many different realities at the same time. I feel that the director is only allowing a particular picture for people to see, hiding the truth in his fictional reality. He creates this glamorous narrative around the academy. I am confused, angry and devastated at the same time. It sometimes feels like I am watching a movie where I find myself being played by a horrible actor who plays a role that makes absolutely no difference – the show is going on anyway... And what about the footballs, the cones and the clothes? I bet there is money involved as well. But that is, of course, not worth mentioning. It makes the whole NGO development-goodwill blurry and turns it into a transaction where the object is a boy. Is that a minor detail, Dear Diary?

Dear God: Caretaker

Joseph is sick. Sarah and I do not have money for both school fees and medical bills. I do not know what to do. Please help us. Guide us in this difficult situation we find ourselves in right now. What should we do? I work as hard as I can for my boys at the football team, and we have a tournament in the weekend at Lugogo Stadium in Kampala, but I do not know if we will make it because I also have to be here for my family. I think I will go to the tournament as these boys have looked forward to having a good weekend full of joy, laughs and football. I pray for Sarah to stay strong at home with my family.

Thank you, God

My team won the tournament during the weekend! The boys were so happy! And now two of the boys got their scholarships extended at the local school where they are also playing football because they performed so well. I am glad for them. I also just got a call from the muzungu academy in Masaka. They told me that they saw Alex perform extremely good and that they want to have him at their academy. This might be the opportunity that my family has been waiting for. They might want to give me money. Then I can take care of Joseph. Joseph is feeling worse, and he is not eating. But I have also promised Alex's parents that I would take care of their son. And I do not know these people from Masaka... I have been coaching and taking care of Alex since he was 4 years old, I have made sure that he is in a good school and that he plays football four times a week. He is a talent. A good boy. But God, I have to take the money so that I can save my family and then I will tell Alex' parents that he is in a better place with the muzungus. I will ask for 3.000.000 Shillings because I have been coaching Alex for almost three years and I have also paid for medical bills. But I am in trouble with the team when Alex is gone. He is my best striker. Such talent. He scored 14 goals in Lugogo – and he makes my team popular. So, God, I pray for Alex. I pray for my Joseph and my family, and I pray for my team to have success in the future.

Dear Diary: A Ugandan Coach

You know when you have to do something, but you are not sure if you want to do it or if what you are going to do is actually the right thing to do. You know that feeling? Of course you do because I have been writing to you about this feeling before. It is inside of you.

We were at this tournament in Lugogo where we played during the whole weekend. It was a perfect weekend. We played many games, and our boys did a great job. The boys played with our philosophy very well. They were experimenting with and exploring their new skills in a game situation. Outstanding practice. But I was also struggling this weekend. I had to coach, take care of our boys, and organize a lot of things. At the same time, I also had to scout for new boys. We had not been at the tournament for more than a couple of hours before my boss came up to me and told me that he wanted to get in contact with a specific player.

A couple of hours... And my boss was already telling me to scout and recruit... I tried to get in touch with the coach of the player, but he would not even talk to me. I went back to my boss and told him about it. My boss told me why I went there in my rain jacket?! He was mad. I went to the coach again, and now he listened to me. He saw the logo at my t-shirt “El Cambio Academy”... I asked if I could talk to the player, but the coach said that he was the caretaker and the only one they should talk to. He said that we are the adults, we are the men, we should take care of this. (I know it’s expected of me, but I did not know if I wanted to).

I did not bother to go back to my boss, because I knew he would send me off again to find the player and talk to him. So, I was creative, I found another boy, and I told that boy, to say to the player that he should see me behind the building. The player came around the corner, and I quickly told him that El Cambio Academy was interested in him to join the academy. I told him that he needed to explain to his caretaker that he wanted to change academy. Diary, now I feel strange. I don’t know what is happening to me. I did my job, I did what my boss told me to do. But I also went behind the back of a brother!

Meta text: Confessional thoughts on writing

The previous Dear Diary texts have formed rhizomes across each other where each writer has expressed thoughts and argued for their motives and their dilemmas during the recruitment process. I am inspired explicitly by Van Maanen's (2011) ethnographic style called 'Confessional Tales'. Confessional tales are suggested to be a style of writing that acknowledges ethnographic writing as anything else than straightforward (Van Maanen, 2011). 'Normally' this kind of writing is suggested to be a tool for the ethnographer during the fieldwork, and it is argued that through this style of writing the author can "demystify fieldwork or participant-observation by showing how the technique is practiced in the field" (p. 73). Confessional tales are highly relying on the "I" during the writing, embracing the voice of the author while allowing writing in a reflexive, emotional and personal style.

Much confessional work is done to convince the audience of the human qualities of the fieldworker. Often the ethnographer mentions personal biases, character flaws, or bad habits as a way of building an ironic self-portrait with which the readers can identify (See, I'm just like you, full of human foibles) (p. 75).

As written in the quote, the ethnographer often mentions personal biases, character or habits, indicating that it is a "tool" that the ethnographer can use in the fieldwork or study to open up and create relatedness. I will not deny that this style has inspired me while I did my notes and stories in the evenings after a day in the field at the academy. I think the style is essential for ethnographers to think with and develop as I have tried in the Dear Diary texts. They are created while thinking with Confessional Tales as it allowed me to write from the position of an "I". However, not a traditional "I" since none of the participants did write in a Diary and gave it to me – I tried to imagine what they would have been writing in a personal book if they had the opportunity. Diaries are often a place for the ethnographer to 'sum up' what happened during the fieldwork, a place to confess dilemmas about experiences and reflect upon theoretical and ethical elements (Van Maanen, 2011). I also used my diary as a place to let go of frustrations and reflections, but I was more interested in creating perspectives and stories about my fieldwork. I used my diary as a place for 'playthinking' and experimentation

(Murriss & Haynes, 2018) and that is why I have selected this form or style for my previous pages – as I argue, that form allows another use of language as I tried to imagine what different actors would think and write down in a personal diary. A diary allows a language that is different from an academic lexicon and expression and it allowed me to create perspectives that are linked across the different actors. Do not get me wrong; this is not an attempt to represent or “give voice to marginalized persons” by claiming that I let them speak “truly as it happened” (St. Pierre, 2018). I instead created these pages as an attempt to create dilemmas that were not yet created – I thought with the conversations that I had with different people, but I do not claim to represent a deeper meaning. Representationalism is not possible when I work from a perspective of post qualitative research (St. Pierre, 2018), and this is not an attempt to sneak representation inside from a backdoor.

Meta text: The best interest of the child

I will, in the following text, attempt to illustrate and discuss how the director, El Cambio Academy, the caretaker (local coach) and the scout (academy coach) had different motives and interest when the recruitment process happened. I will discuss how the principle of primary consideration must be given to the best interest of the child in all action affecting them (Article, 3) is entangled in different ways which raise different dilemmas as different motives are at stake?

The recruitment of the boy (Alex) can be characterized as a blurry and tangled process where the next steps seem almost spontaneous and reactionary, depending on what each actor may or may not be doing. The director argues that the best talents in Uganda deserves an opportunity to develop in the best possible environments and do not hesitate to label themselves as that best opportunity available. El Cambio Academy uses Article 6 from the UNCRC, which states that the child has a right to survival and development as an argument for offering the opportunity to the child. The academy argues in a way where they create that the child deserves to be at El Cambio Academy because they believe themselves to be the only place where this particular child can reach its full potential.

The caretaker, the boy's original coach, is often a person with many different roles during this process. He is the person trusted by the boy's family to take care of and provide for him. The caretaker has often made sure that the boy has access to a school where he gets free scholarship because of his football talent. Being a caretaker, a father figure and a football coach is not an unusual range of tasks that this person is occupying in Uganda. Many of these people find themselves in multiple roles as they serve parents, children, schools and football teams as a part of their profession. They make their living through the game that interferes with many different people, institutions and structures. Navigating in this complicated network becomes even more complex when El Cambio Academy approaches the caretaker – now he also has to serve as a player's agent, which is also known from the literature as an intermediary (Yilmaz et al., 2018). The living that the caretaker is practising can be considered, salary-wise, as something that 'just makes him and his family get through the day'. So, when El Cambio Academy approaches him, he sees an opportunity to provide and take care of his family, which goes far beyond his regular salary. El Cambio Academy offers money as "compensation" for the boy which puts him in a situation where he might not think about the best interest of the child but of his own personal profit which he can use for his family. Or, it creates a dilemma for the caretaker where he has to make a decision whether what is the best solution for his family, his son, his talented boy, his team and himself. What is the right decision to make? Where are the parents in all of this? Is El Cambio Academy exploiting or using their dominant position to make things go exactly as they want? Or can they be considered as an NGO/Football academy that follows already established structures or could they do differently?

The transaction – Signatures and Shillings

It is Friday afternoon and the boy's agent has finally agreed to visit El Cambio Academy to sort out the paperwork. The agent arrives with the boy in the backseat of the car. The boy has been taken out of school without him been aware of this trip happening to Masaka today. When Alex found out that they were driving to El Cambio Academy he became both excited and nervous beyond what he has ever been before in his 7 years of living. Am I an academy player now? Where am I going to stay?

Alex is staring out the window thinking about what Coach has arranged for him. Coach has only involved him very little up until now. Coach looks in the mirror and says "Alex, where are you? You will now be in a better place. These people have boots, good equipment, good food and money!"

Meanwhile

The director is making sure that every boy at the academy is aware of their responsibility. He is explaining to them that a new player is arriving and that he expects them to welcome him as a brother to the family. "You remember the first day you came here. You were maybe a bit nervous – and you guys helped each other." And the director continues: "we will of course also be here. We are the adults".

Another place at the same time: Press pin: 2019, You want a receipt: Yes. Select amount: 1.000.000 UGS.

A few minutes later: The manager who was sent for money is arriving at the academy where it is about time for the new family member to arrive.

Agent, boy, director and manager of the academy is gathered

The document is signed and the money is handed over after a close inspection of the medical documents showing that the boy is healthy and ready for the life of the academy without being sick of HIV/AIDS.

Please sign here:



Contract for "Player Development Fee"

This agreement is constituted between the following parties:

Name: _____
Academy: _____
Player: _____ ID no.: _____
ECA rep.: _____

The above-mentioned academy representative, hereby, agrees to handover and relinquish any rights for the respective player in mention, to El Cambio Academy's care, training and education program. By signing this contract, the academy representative in mention guarantees that the player is not contracted to any other third-party and additionally the said academy cannot make any further economic claims towards El Cambio Academy.

El Cambio Academy pays the respective academy a "player development fee" of **1,000,000 UG Shillings** for the player, going above and beyond the FIFA and FUFA regulations. The money is received prior to signing this document and this document acts as a receipt for the payment.

Furthermore, El Cambio Academy hereby undertakes to pay the following (one-time) amount, should the said player become professional and be transferred to one of the top leagues from El Cambio Academy – in accordance to the UEFA ranking at the given time the player obtains a professional contract.

Top 5 league:	20,000,000	UG Shillings
Top 6-10 league:	10,000,000	UG Shillings
11 and below leagues:	5,000,000	UG Shillings

Preconditions before execution of this contract:

The academy representative must supply El Cambio Academy with medical records of the above-mentioned player. The medical record should and must provide information regarding the below mentioned medical conditions: AIDS/ HIV, asthma, hepatitis B, heart conditions, blood pressure.

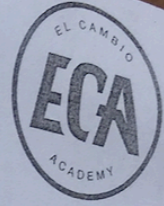
Any other medical condition which would otherwise hinder physical and technical development of a player or any way render a player incapable of standing the physical demands of football should be declared and if not declared, El Cambio Academy may at its option decide to terminate this undertaking forthwith.

By signing this document, the academy representative guarantees that the supplied information regarding the above-mentioned player is true, without any falsehoods or any misrepresentations and by withholding information this contract can be deemed null and void at the option of El Cambio Academy or may be terminated forthwith.

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By El Cambio Academy exercising the above-mentioned right to terminate it will not in any way preclude it from any other remedies available under the law.

All parties to this agreement especially the academy and its representative(s) have a right and have been advised to seek independent legal advice or any other expert advice before execution of this agreement by a signature on this agreement, the academy representative confirms that he/she understands the contents of this agreement and the implications therein.

Date & Signature – Academy Representative

Date & Signature – For El Cambio Academy

NB: In the unlikely event that El Cambio Academy does not receive payment for the player – nor will the coach receive payment for said player.



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Road trip to the parents

El Cambio management, the director, the caretaker and the boy are now in the same car. Almost like the A-Team. One mission: Get the signature from the parents, which will make the transfer complete. The caretaker is on the academy's side now as they have already signed a contract and exchanged the 'development fee'... Once again sitting in the back, now in the academy's car, the boy finds himself staring out the window as they pass by more and more familiar places. Five hours of drive from Masaka, passing the equator once again this day, getting stuck in traffic in Kampala as they find their way to the other side and on the way east towards Jinja. They reach the parents' place around dinner time.

The caretaker introduces everybody to each other, and the parents open their home and welcome them as special guests. They all sit down, and the caretaker explains that he has found this El Cambio Academy and that it will be an extraordinary opportunity for their boy. The father asks "Where is Alex? ALEX, come here and sit".

Alex was playing around outside as he found his three brothers and four sisters that he has not seen in a long time. No time to play. Alex joined the meeting and sat on the floor. The atmosphere was strange. The family did not speak English, so everything was said in Luganda between the caretaker, the father and the manager from the academy. The director was sitting passively with his bag, ready to unfold and present the contract. He knew exactly what was going on. Everything was following his plan, the only thing that could cause a small issue was if the caretaker mentioned that he got 1.000.000 Shillings – but they had an agreement, the compensation was between the academy and him.

The director got a signal, but it was not the signal he expected. He asked his employee what was going on and if there was a problem? His was confused – this was not how it was during many other recruitments? The father left the room and asked his wife to follow.

Family first

The father and the mother went outside and had a brief conversation. There was not so much to decide if it was up to the father alone, but he knew that his wife was not comfortable with their son playing so much football.

“I do not want my son to play football. He is now seven years old, and he should not play for the rest of his life. There is no future for him if he plays football. You see the young boys in Kampala, what do they do? They play football and has no money. That is not a future for the family,” said the mother while she pointed her finger around the compound, wanting to show her husband that there were far more significant responsibilities to take care of than their son playing football.

“Yes. You are right, but I do not care if our boy plays football with the muzungus and in return gets free school.”

“But do you believe them, dear husband? Do you believe that they will pay for school fees?” asked the wife while she looked intensely at her husband.


“I do believe them. You see, Paul is here with them, and he says that we can trust them. We have trusted Paul to take care of our boy for many years now. He has trained our boy to this level. He is the coach. He is the professional and if he says that this is a good opportunity – then we should do it.” The husband pointed around the compound just as his wife did and said, “Remember that this academy will pay for school until he is 18, and remember that they will pay for food, transport, medical bills, the doctor, clothes. The money we save we can use to provide for our family and send his sister to school as well.”

“Okay – if you say that we can trust them then I will trust them. Nevertheless, I do not want to hear that anything is happening to my beloved son, do you understand?” said the mother and went inside again.

“Alex will be fine. He is a boy. Family first!” said the father and went with her inside again.

Back in business – the final signature

The father signs this contract and thereby hands over his son's life to El Cambio Academy.

 LIVE

Consent of the parent/guardian

This agreement is constituted between the following parties:

Name: [REDACTED]

Relationship: ☒ Parent ☐ Guardian

Player: [REDACTED]

ECA rep.: [REDACTED] ID nr.: _____

The above-mentioned parent/guardian hereby agrees to give full consent and approval as well as to handover the respective child/ player in mention, to the El Cambio Academy's care, training and education program. Furthermore, the parent/guardian in mention, hereby, authorizes El Cambio Academy to take full responsibility and care of the above-mentioned child from this date and until the 18th birthday.

That as a parent/ guardian, I understand that there are certain risks of injury inherent in the practice and play of this sport of soccer/ football as well as in travelling and other related activities. That in addition to giving my full consent for my child to participate in the El Cambio Academy programme which I am fully aware of, as well as confirming that my child has no physical or mental disabilities or infirmities that would restrict his full participation in the El Cambio Academy programme, I also release ECA from any liability to suffer any suit for damages resulting from any injury sustained by my child from the normal course of his participation in the designated sport and any activities such as training inter alia incidental thereto.

ECA assumes no other responsibility in relation to the child/ player save what is stipulated in the ECA care, training and education programme and the parent/ guardians is fully aware of the same.



I also confirm as a parent/ guardian that I have been advised to seek independent legal advice before execution of this Consent; an opportunity availed to me to do so and by appending my signature on this document I make an informed decision knowing the meaning of all the attendant provisions herein and repercussions and that the contents therein have been translated to me in a language I understand.

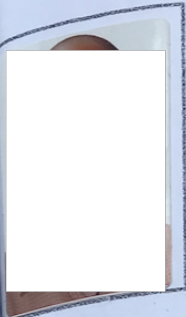
Preconditions to execution of this contract:

The parent/guardian must supply El Cambio Academy with a birth certificate of the above-mentioned player along with valid documents stating that the player or the parents are legally citizens of Uganda.

By signing this document, the parent/guardian confirms to be the true parent/guardian of the above-mentioned child whose passport photo is attached herein. Lastly, the parent/guardian guarantees that the above supplied information regarding the above-mentioned player is made honestly and truthfully and by withholding, intentionally relaying lies or misrepresenting any information herein, the contract will can be deemed null and void at the option of ECA.

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05/01/2021

Date & Signature - Parent/ Guardian

[Redacted signature]

Date & Signature - For El Cambio Academy

NOTE: If the player is violating the El Cambio Academy's values and codex, El Cambio Academy are at liberty to terminate the player's participation in the El Cambio Academy programme

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Meta text: Did I fail as a researcher?

Maybe the question should be asked differently: Did I fail as a person at this moment? I had an opportunity to have a particular conversation, but I chose not to do it. I risked myself (Kuntz, 2015).

To give context for this question and why this might have been the biggest dilemma for me as a researcher during the fieldwork.

As explained, I went to the academy with an idea and a goal of getting involved with as many people as possible. I wanted to hear as many stories, listen to as many voices and create as many perspectives, discussions and conversations as possible. One morning, an opportunity happened that I thought was impossible for me. I did not think that I would get in contact with the parents – even though that I to begin with really wanted to, but this one morning a whole group of parents were at the academy due to some paperwork. It was not even at the academy, it was at the place where I was staying, and they were sitting right outside in the garden drinking tea after their long drive to Masaka. I could have walked right out to them and asked if they would let me join them – but I could not do it.

I felt so profoundly entangled with the academy, the director, the staff, the coaches, the volunteers and even the boys. I felt a huge responsibility to these people. I felt connected to them, their very different lives and their very different situations. Furthermore, that very morning I could not move out of the house and approach the parents. The reason was that I was aware of them being placed at the sideline while El Cambio was negotiating and agreeing with the caretaker about the transfer. I could not put myself in a situation where I knew about 1.000.000 UG Shillings and just sit and ask them general questions where I could not be honest with them in return. I could not sit there and listen and not be able to talk and say what came to my mind.

Moreover, that was how I had done the fieldwork so far: I had explained my purpose for being there. I had explained to the people that we might have different perspectives on how to recruit a boy, but what I always offered in return for their time, their stories and perspectives was my honesty respectfully. And I remembered that I thought to myself when I was inside the house waiting for the parents to leave: I will not sit and pretend

to listen while I have something at my heart that I really wanted them to know and discuss. I also remember that I thought: Will I create a mess, even more of one and more significant than I might have done already if I told the parents about them being at the sideline?

I do not know. I guess I made a choice where I tried to protect myself from that situation which I imagined would be uncomfortable for both the parents and me to end up in. However, thinking of that morning still gives me a strange feeling in my body as I also imagine that conversation as a potential game-changer. A conversation with a parent or two might have created perspectives which I now only can dream of and create though conversations with other Ugandans.

The reason why I chose to write this “meta-text” is that I think it shows how deeply I felt connected to the people that I interacted with and how carefully I still chose to be as a critical ethnographer (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Even though that I did not interact with the parent in a ‘traditional’ way, as a direct verbally conversation or interview, I still felt incredibly connected to them, and I guess that is what posthumanism is about – realizing that we are connected to every possible element in this world, and we have to realize that and take responsibility (Braidotti, 2018; Deleuze & Guattari; St. Pierre, 2018).

Meta text: Is it an adoption contract?

The first section of the “Consent of the parent/guardian” contract:

The above-mentioned parent/guardian hereby agrees to give full consent and approval as well as to handover the respective child/player in mention, to the El Cambio Academy’s care, training and education program. Furthermore, the parent/guardian in mention, hereby, authorizes El Cambio Academy to take full responsibility and care of the above-mentioned child from this date until the 18- birthday.

El Cambio Academy is not just handing over free scholarships to anyone. The few who are offered are carefully chosen among many boys who would give up everything together with their family for an

opportunity like that. Parents are handing over the responsibility of their child to an academy. I am surprised that such a document exists? Never should a parent be in a situation where they would have to hand over their child because of an opportunity to get free school. Is this exploitation? El Cambio Academy is taking advantage of a situation where the parents would let go their son because they believe he would be in a good place and then they would be able to support their children at home more.

That could be one perspective? There must be other ways of constructing and creating alternative collaborations between football academies and parents so that such extremes can be avoided where parent's handover children to institutions? Are such documents even legal?

The situation is far more complicated, complex and entangled. Every family is not the same and might have many different reasons for why they chose as they do for their child. I write this because I do not claim to know all of their motives and reasons to do parenting. My knowledge might even be considered as very limited since I did not interact with them due to the reason mentioned earlier. What I try to illustrate is what dilemmas that might occur when families get an offer of free school until the boy reaches 18 and then have to hand over such responsibility to an institution.

Alex is seven years old, which means El Cambio Academy is offering 11 years of free school. School fees vary a lot across Uganda due to the standard of the school and which level the children participate. An average of 400-600 USD might be a reasonable estimate per year ending up with a total of 4400-6600 USD for 11 years. This is such a substantial amount of money, and food, school uniform, books and cost of living is not even included, which will make the total amount higher. The offer is so big that it is almost impossible for parents to say no?

I do not intend to rob Ugandan parents their agency and the fact that they have a choice and that they could say no to the offer. I think it is vital to remember that it is the academy who sets the terms where there is

nothing to negotiate or discuss: You get what you get. Take it or leave it otherwise we (El Cambio Academy) find another boy with a family who will sign. Is this fair?

I think it is essential to notice that the parents, of course, see the opportunity to both do something lovely and suitable for their boy, and something useful for their entire family as it would benefit the family financially. The parents do what they think is the best for their boy in the situation that is given, and if they have to sign a paper to benefit from the offer – they will do it. The parents might see many benefits for their child if they follow this offer; they might see it as an upgrade from already existing alternatives. Better school and education? Brand new environment with many people to take care of a few children? Computers, play-station, a lot of proper football equipment? What is not to like?

I think this question has to be asked: Is it all right to offer something so valuable and in return, demand parents to handover the responsibility for their child by signing a contract?

Where is Teddy?

The parents signed the contract, and Alex is now officially a part of El Cambio Academy, connected to something far more significant than he can grasp at this point. He will become a part of a character program which will develop his personality so that he is prepared for a future where he will either success through football or his education. El Cambio Academy will develop a character that is aware of its responsibility for the continent, the nation, the community and its family. Alex has to be educated to become a strong human that can navigate in a globalized world.

These things will become a part of his DNA, but right now is Alex finding himself passing through Kampala once again where the traffic is less because it is getting late. He is tired but refusing to sleep. Instead, he sits with his feet crawled up to his butt and leaning his head against his knees and counting the street lights passing outside. Things get more familiar as they get closer to the town where his boarding school is. In the car are the manager and the director. Alex gets excited as they are very close to the small road that leads to the school, but the car is not slowing down. Alex has been at this school for four years and for a moment he questioned himself if there was another road that would lead to the school? Nevertheless, as the town ran out of houses, he once again found himself on the road towards the equator where he would pass for the third time today.

Alex was getting tired, and he started to think about his night-time-buddy. His Teddy. Teddy has followed him since he could remember, and Teddy has always been a supporter during the nights in the boarding school's dormitory. He started to wonder if he would get his school bag and clothes for school on Monday. He thought to himself that he might have to cross equator again tomorrow where they would go back for his stuff.

Meta text: Transportation of cargo

When the parents signed the contract, all official documents were complete. Alex was, from that moment onwards, in El Cambio Academy's custody. An academy boy. It was late, so the representatives from El Cambio Academy skipped the offer of staying for dinner – they had transport to do. Just as the director was about to stand up from the chair and shake every body's hand the former caretaker said: "I think it will be best for Alex if he stayed here for the night with his family. I will bring him to Masaka in the morning. Do not worry."

As illustrated in the previous text, "Where is Teddy?", Alex did not stay for a night at his parent's place. El Cambio Academy did not accept the former caretaker's offer. Why not? Wouldn't it have been in the best interest for Alex to spend time with his family? Wouldn't it be a fantastic compromise?

El Cambio Academy did not want Alex to stay with family and handover the responsibility of transport to the caretaker. El Cambio Academy has experienced from previous recruitments, that the caretaker leaves with the boy and never shows up at the academy again and gives zero for the contracts and keeps the money. That would be a waste of work and resources for the academy, and they would argue that the caretaker was rootless, corrupt and selfish – and ultimately not thinking about what was best for Alex. El Cambio Academy wants to prevent this situation from happening, so they convince the parents that the best thing for Alex would be if he came directly with them.

I write this because I want to illustrate the complexities and how personal motives creates dilemmas when it is less expected. New dilemmas are created and happening every time a step has to be taken in the recruitment of Alex where all the actors are claiming to do what is the best for Alex. But they want to do it in different ways, and at the same time, there is never existing a complete feeling of trust. El Cambio Academy partnered with the caretaker and went to seal the deal with the parents – but as soon as that part is solved, El Cambio Academy fear that the former caretaker would practice some kind of kidnapping? Moreover, to prevent that

scenario from occurring, El Cambio Academy transport him safely to Masaka. Safe ground... But at what cost? Alex did not get the chance to take his few personal belongings from his boarding school and say goodbye to his classmates and teammates. However, was that even important? He is just a boy? And El Cambio Academy will provide new things for him. And does an academy boy really need Teddy?

Metatext: I feel connected but yet so strange

I did not talk to Alex (It is, by the way, a pseudonym). Nor did I talk to any of the other boys who were recruited to this academy. That is as always, a truth with a certain amount of modifications attached. I said “Hi, how are you” as they said “hi” every time we met during the fieldwork. So, the previous pages are not created because I had several conversations with the boys, where they told me about how much they were missing their personal belongings. The stories are made of many different conversations, thoughts and ideas that happened between many other people and me. It is impossible to fixate where ‘it came from’ and it does not interest me to show where it came from as I cannot make a representation of where it came from (St. Pierre, 2018). What I think is very important to write about is why I did not talk to the boys from the academy. The director gave his permission so I could easily have talked to them. However, I could not do it. I usually have absolutely no problem with talking and interacting with children in that specific age group (7-12), but it made no sense for me to do it this time. To add some context: These boys are highly exposed through the academy’s social media profiles on the platforms of Instagram and Facebook. Here they are interviewed and asked questions about what difference El Cambio Academy is doing for their lives and how great an opportunity it is for them to be there. They are asked deeply personal questions, which I, as a person and researcher, find ethical wrong to ask and place online in front of their 36.000 followers. Besides this caricatured setup that continues to enforce a stereotypical story about white NGOs saving poor black children, these boys are also to be found singing birthday songs for Morten Olsen (El Cambio Academy Ambassador) or saying, “thank you” for all the support dressed up in Christmas hats...

I wanted to talk to them – but I thought that the answers they would provide would be the same indoctrinated ones that they give in the videos. I did not want to talk to them, because I argue that it requires an exceptional relation to children in general if you intend to engage in a conversation with them that might involve strong memories to family and feelings in general. Another significant argument related to my thoughts on being a responsible researcher (Kuntz, 2015). In Denmark, we need the parents of a child to sign a document if researchers want to interview them and take pictures of them. If I followed the director's words, I would have been allowed to talk to them and take pictures of them because El Cambio Academy is the one responsible. However, I did not want to do that because it would be me abandoning rules and morality that exist in Denmark. I have experienced a good rule of thumb, which I think the academy could be inspired from: Never do something in Uganda (or other places in the world) that you would not do at home.

A question that I think has to be asked, as well, is whether these online marketing strategies from El Cambio Academy is exploitation? Is it conflicting with Article 36 that state that governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example, media. The children are used because they create attention, and the attention is very profitable for the academy and its sponsors... However, El Cambio Academy would of course state that the parents sign the conditions in the first place where they allowed El Cambio Academy to use them as small commercial accessories.

I remember that I told the director about this. I told him why I did not want to talk to the boys. I remember it very clear when he told me that it also was good practice as it would prepare the boys for a life with media as a football player.

Dear Diary: Ethnographic Rage

~~This is the last page that I will write inside of you. It is the 4th of January 2020.~~

~~What is going on at this Danish football academy in Uganda cannot be described as anything else than exploitation. I would characterize it as a colonialist project which is gaining its strength from stereotypical portraying of Ugandan and African people as poor and underdeveloped. It is a project characterized by taking advantage of well indented NGI ideas to sponsor a project that seeks to create professional football players and earn money. It is a project that can be characterized with adjectives as greed, ignorance, privileged and crafty. A project that divides families, rob children their opportunity to stay with families for a scholarship. A project that bribes intermediaries and defends their actions by pointing the finger at the Ugandan culture and claiming that the people of Uganda are corrupt. A project that allows a price tag at a child's back, there is seven years old should never exist. Nevertheless, they do exist, and they use the money which was donated by "supportive" Danish companies to contribute to "the culture they do not like, but it is convenient for them anyway". We can from an academic position show, prove, illustrate and give voice to actors at micro-level and be surprised when they actually have agency and that they create networks themselves to navigate through in these exploitative realities. It is nevertheless still pathetic to me. Because of course do these people have agency. They fight with whatever that is possible, with dignity and with their life! However, we must never forget that these academies and European football clubs were never present at the continent if they did not know it to be profitable for themselves. Of course, we have seen European boys get scholarships if they play football—but what we have never seen is this academy in Europe demanding the full responsibility for 11 years in return. Moreover, this is what I mean, academies, El Cambio Academy, is only here in Uganda because their mission would never be possible in Europe. They seek places where they can launch their extremes and where nobody really would care—because it is Africa and Uganda... Do we really give a fuck for these countries and their inhabitants anyway?~~

Metatext: Say why you say it

Instead, as I now argue, the only real guidance, much more demanding than it might at first appear, is to carefully say why you choose to express something in one way rather than another (Jensen, 2017, p. 12)

I wrote the last page because I felt I had to. Doing this project has felt like walking around with a wound that would not heal. I have felt so connected with these people and witnessed how they have been and are exploited the academy – though I know that El Cambio Academy says otherwise. However, I have always had the privileged position that I could leave and then just hide behind my computer. It feels like nothing compared to the reality that these people are exposed to. I have tried to make different text that offers different perspectives and illustrate dilemmas about the recruitment of young boys to the academy. I do not claim that my text should or is carrying the burden of adequate representation on its shoulders, but instead, I argue writing as a machine for making elements cohere as an event itself (Jensen, 2017) with the ability to create new connections rhizomatically (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). I have tried to make my ethnographic writing a matter of weaving patterns between a diverse range of stories, materials, people and children's rights to illustrate complexities and make other futures possible.

Recognizing the weaving of patterns to make relations and, perhaps, effects, as what ethnographic writing is and does, however, is also a way of encouraging the trying out different approaches, styles and forms of arguments with a view to testing their efficacy (Jensen, 2017, p. 13)

And I hope that my pages weave patterns that both were not yet seen before in this field of research but also not yet thought of before in discussions about the complexities surrounding children's rights related to the academies cherry-picking of boys.

Discussion: Not closure but opening

I am asking myself the question: “How am I going to end this?” Of course, I am not the first researcher (student) in history to ask this question as the ‘end’ is getting closer and closer. I will try to discuss children’s rights from the position of posthumanism because such a position offers a radical different explanation of what we have come to know as the ‘human’ category. I argue that it is important to engage critically in the use of children’s rights and not just accept it as a framework that can be applied for future research without a critical discussion of their philosophical and political roots.

I will engage in a discussion related to how children’s rights are **criticized as a Western political project**, how **children’s rights are anchored in a humanist position** and how this **position can be criticized from a posthumanist perspective**. Children’s rights and human rights counts for every human (Article 1) which makes them universal across the globe. Though it is also known throughout history as a project that has failed and caused humans to treat other humans as they did not have the same rights or was not even in the same human category. Here in particular I think about slavery where other human beings were turned into a resource for other humans, but we also know from history that for example women did not have the same rights as the man, and still struggle for equality (Snaza & Weaver, 2015). Snaza and Weaver (2015) write: As even the most cursory glance through histories of modernity will reveal, states have had no difficulty in denying the humanity of women, slaves, the poor, and colonized natives (p. 25). It is a difficult discussion as many different aspects are at stake, but I argue that it is problematic just to acknowledge cultural differences as a legitimization of why some rights are not counting for some different people. So, my goal is to discuss why children’s rights are problematic as a universal standard of the human life but also why it is dangerous to accept violation of these rights based on cultural differences which ultimately would end in total cultural relativism.

The “Western” perspective

Human rights and children’s rights have been criticized for being a Western political project (Snaza & Weaver, 2015) created and based on Western values and ideas of what it means to be a human. These ideas and values have created global politics for human life and its rights (Snaza & Weaver, 2015). The critique of this global and supposedly universal set of values is to be found when it clashes with other cultures’ recognition of what it would mean to be ‘human’. If the critique is acknowledged due to an argument of respecting cultural differences though the cultures do not align with human rights would lead to some kind of cultural relativism where every violation of human rights can be defended from the respect to ‘culture’. This way of thinking would ultimately lead to that human rights are only for a specific group of humans because their culture aligns with the fundamental ideas and values - and those who do not align they would be considered as ‘almost’ humans which is accepted because of their different cultures (Snaza & Weaver, 2015).

Human rights can be characterized as an anthropocentric project as it privileges human certain rights that no other thing in the world has. Human rights are deeply anchored in humanism because of this privileged status of the human compared to e.g. animals. Following the humanist idea of the existence of a ‘human’ is possible because something is not ‘human’. Humanism and human rights rely on the ability to define what a ‘human’ is, what it means to be a human. Being able to make certain rights for humans also means that the ‘human’ has to be defined as a category. Humans have created the category ‘human’ because ‘humans’ have the ability to be rational (Snaza & Weaver, 2015). Snaza and Weaver (2015) write that most humanist scholars drive a wedge between what is human and what is an animal due to that humans are rational creatures having the ability to think, and therefore different from everything else which could be categorized as nature. By creating a category for what it would mean to be a ‘human’ makes it possible from a humanistic position to talk about being “in the category” or “outside the category”. When someone or something falls next to the “human” category” makes it fall into the category of ‘nature’. Inherent to the humanist perspective is an implicit

understanding of nature as everything that is not human and therefore a resource which humans are allowed to use and exploit as they please. So defining what it would mean to be a human due to its ability to think and be rational would ultimately fail because rationality is not the same across cultures. But not only will the argument of rationality fail across cultures and geographical locations, but also by restricting certain abilities to 'humans' only. Animals, for example, have minds much like ours and animals think, feel, make plans, use language and they even mourn (Snaza & Weaver, 2015). The critique of humanism from a posthumanism position is that these abilities and criteria are not unique for 'humans' and therefore allow 'humans' to position themselves with a higher status. We cannot take patent on these criteria - animals express emotions and think as well that generate plans and knowledge.

Nonhuman animals have complex epistemologies and make their way in the world via complex ontologies. Animals produce knowledge and have a sense of being and time. Some animals sense that they are going to die; some animals know who their enemies are. They take care of their young and grieve if their young die. All of these ideas fly in the face of humanist education because during the heyday of humanism (again with the exceptions of Darwin and Nietzsche) people thought that animals were for the most part dumb beasts (Snaza & Weaver, 2015, p. 51).

But we would end up with the same problems using other criteria, for example, physical appearance, for what it would mean to be a 'human'. Because 'humans' do not look the same. Or is the 'human' defined by having 46 chromosomes? What about the humans who have 47? 'Humans' are very different and the problem with categorization and definitions is that whenever a category is defined something is already being excluded. And this is a fundamental critique of humanism and human rights that those fundamental ideas rest on a foundation where categorization is required. The critique is general, categorization will end up with inclusion or exclusion. When a humanist position allows and relies on inclusion and exclusion the possibility of future exclusion becomes a reality within that discourse of logics. And we have seen it throughout history where the humanity of women, slaves, the poor, and colonized natives was denied and still is (Snaza & Weaver, 2015). The main problem is that it is extremely difficult to define what a human is and every attempt causes new

problems and another problem is that the “findings of modern-day ethologists are not new. Even though Darwin knew these things in the 1800s, his finding got lost in the battles on evolution” (Snaza & Weaver, 2015, p. 52).

Posthumanism and critique of children’s rights

In the following section, I will discuss and criticize children’s rights from a posthumanist position. Such a perspective necessarily includes a general critique of some of the common humanist ideals since the posthumanist perspective involves both a critique of anthropocentrism as well as a general critique of many of the common sense binaries such as subject/object, nature/culture, mind/body that we are used to thinking with (Barad, 2007). Posthumanism rejects the fundamental assumptions of humanism and suggests a radically different position of humans’ ontological status. Karen Barad (2007) writes:

Posthumanism does not presume that man is the measure of all things. It is not held captive to the distance scale of the human but rather is attentive to the practices by which scale is produced. Posthumanism has no patience for principled claims presuming the banishment or death of metaphysics, especially when such haughty assertions turn out to be decoys for the covert resurrection of Man as the unspoken measure of what is and isn't observable or intelligible.⁸ It doesn't abide by prohibitions against talk of ontology, restricting all deliberation to the epistemological (moored at the safe harbor of Man). Posthumanism eschews both humanist and structuralist accounts of the subject that position the human as either pure cause or pure effect, and the body as the natural and fixed dividing line between interiority and exteriority (p. 136).

Posthumanism is not a call for an ultimate relativism but is a radically different position from humanism where humans have to realize their responsibility for the world due to their fundamental position as being entangled with everything (Braidotti, 2018) as explained before with animals because we do not have patent on abilities and life. “Posthumanism does not presume that man is the measure of all things” (Barad, 2007, p. 136). From this position, it makes little sense to create and have specific human and children’s rights solely for a privileged category of ‘human’ and ‘children’ because there is no distinction between living and nonliving in this world from a posthumanist position.

Posthumanism, as I intend it here, is not calibrated to the human; on the contrary, it is about taking issue with human exceptionalism while being accountable for the role we play in the differential constitution and differential positioning of the human among other creatures (both living and nonliving). Posthumanism does not attribute the source of all change to culture, denying nature any sense of agency or historicity. In fact, it refuses the idea of a natural (or, for that matter, a purely cultural) division between nature and culture, calling for an accounting of how this boundary is actively configured and reconfigured (Barad, 2007, p. 136).

Karen Barad argues that posthumanism is not another humanist project and stresses that a posthumanist position is unsatisfied with “human exceptionalism”. She emphasises our responsibility through a deeper understanding of our entanglement and relationality, and being a part of the world and argues that we have to take a radical step away from a presumed differentiated position from other creatures. We cannot talk about “separateness” (Barad, 2007, p. 136) because:

Posthumanism eschews both humanist and structuralist accounts of the subject that position the human as either pure cause or pure effect, and the body as the natural and fixed dividing line between interiority and exteriority (p. 136)

Posthumanism is, not an ultimate relativistic position where a sense of responsibility can be argued differently because of arguments related to cultural differences. Posthumanism attacks humanism and the categorization that follows because a ‘human’ category has the consequences of creating realities where its possible to talk about including and excluding, living and nonliving. Humanism creates dichotomies (Snaza & Weaver, 2015). Posthumanism destroys dichotomies. Posthumanism is a serious call for more responsibility (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2018). Posthumanism is a position that advocates for higher sensibility and awareness of how everything in this world is entangled, depended and connected. Nothing exists or stands outside the natural world. We (humans) do not have the privilege of an exterior observational point where we observe the world and posthumanism advocates that “we are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity” (Barad, p. 184). Posthumanism is radically different and as mentioned it raises a serious critique against binary common sense thinking. And by refusing a privileged status of the human makes posthumanist scholars argue that rights

should not solely be for the human species but for all nonliving and living because we are “entangled with a motley crowd of differentially situated species, including landscapes, animals, plants, microorganisms, people, and technologies” (Haraway, 2008, p. 41).

Posthumanist critique of football academies

El Cambio Academy in Uganda has several similarities with Right To Dream as explained earlier. Though they are located in two different geographical contexts and are different in size, I still argue that a discussion rooted in El Cambio Academy and this fieldwork can be understood as a wider discussion and critique of football academies in general. As explained, El Cambio Academy claims to be an NGO working for children in Uganda through football, education, and character programs. They claim to be an organisation that wants to help and create better futures. El Cambio Academy describes itself and its work as altruistic - the child is always at the centre. But as I have illustrated this is far more complicated in practice where different actors with different interests and perspectives connect in the recruitment process. McGee (2018) has criticised Right To Dream for turning a political project onto the personal, where children have to go through educational and character programs to realize their responsibility for their communities, countries and continent. In keeping with this idea, many academies explicitly state one of their aims to be to develop the recruited boys in ways that will allow them to become leaders of the country and inspire communities. To accomplish this mission, these academies typically offer educational opportunities as well as character development programs in addition to the athletic activities. As El Cambio writes on its website: “Off the field, we provide the students with a great education that includes a character program to develop their character and prepare them to become future African role models” (ECA web, 2019). El Cambio Academy thinks and operates from a humanist perspective as they want to develop and educate the recruited boys and ultimately help communities, Uganda, and Africa. But this is not why El Cambio Academy is in Uganda. El Cambio Academy is in Uganda because they can run a business. A business. If this was not a possibility they would never have started. If they really

cared for the children and their life, then they would offer girls free education as well. But El Cambio Academy do not include girls, because there is no financial value in the same scale as with boys. Children's rights, humanism, free education and the NGO label is nothing else than a cover. El Cambio Academy would claim differently. But I argue that El Cambio Academy chose Uganda because they have a free market where they could enter as powerful pioners while they at the same time act like an NGO.

El Cambio Academy chose Uganda because they can allow themselves to rule and chose among the population which they claim to “need their help” and who lacks children's rights. But humanism is ultimately about inclusion and exclusion because humanism relies on the ability to define what it is to be ‘human’, which makes it possible to talk about some “as *potentially human but not yet human*” (Snaza & Weaver, 2015, p. 25). El Cambio Academy recruit young boys who need to become humanized through education, football training, and character programs. El Cambio Academy argues that the children do not have those possibilities without their presence. Even if the boys already have a school to attend, a football academy and a family to take care of their son's life, El Cambio Academy argues that they still need more. The material surroundings are never as good as at El Cambio, the schools and the teachers are never as good as the ones provided by El Cambio Academy just as the football academies and coaches are never as good as those at El Cambio Academy. This “lacking” creates nothing else than a reality where Ugandans are almost but not yet, and El Cambio Academy controls this by deciding who deserves what and when. A boy only deserves their help if the child falls into El Cambio Academy's category of being a ‘talent’. Again, the legacy of humanism and its determination of definitions and categories.

I have already mentioned once why El Cambio Academy chose this particular location but I will list their reasons once again because it illustrates how categorization and definitions lead to El Cambio Academy's appearance:

1. African families need help to survive
2. Africans love soccer.
3. Africans have natural soccer physiques.
4. Africans want to work hard to achieve success.
5. Africa has a huge potential that has not yet been developed.

Why did we choose Uganda?

1. We have already established an academy.
2. We have [sic] reliable network established.
3. The country is untouched by soccer with a population of 40 million (El Cambio Academy, website, 2019)

I quoted this earlier and mentioned that these statements were racist, generalizing, and contributing to a discourse of a stereotyped understanding of Uganda and Africa. From a position of posthumanism, the critique continues. The language they use to describe, define, and categorize is rooted in the humanist position as I discussed and described earlier where physical and mental abilities become definitions. But these categories create a discourse where it becomes a possibility to differentiate which is the main critique from a posthumanist position. The Africans (Ugandans) need help to survive, Africans have a natural soccer physique, Africans want to work hard, Africa has a huge potential that has not yet been developed. These arguments make Africans (Ugandans) “*potentially but not yet human*” (Snaza & Weaver, 2015, p. 25) because “Africans” and “Ugandans” are different from for example ‘Danish’. When something falls next to the category of being ‘human’ it is a part of ‘nature’ following the logic of humanism where nature is a resource which is available for the ‘human’ to control and use (Snaza & Weaver, 2015). We must never forget that El

Cambio Academy chose Uganda because it saw an “untouched” (ECA web, 2019) country of 40 million *potentially but not yet* humans. We must never dwell and accept that El Cambio Academy belief that they have discovered a location where they can practice “humanization” (Snaza & Weaver, 2015, p. 25). El Cambio Academy chose Uganda because it is untouched by the professional European football industry. El Cambio Academy chose Uganda because they can argue that Uganda and its people lack “humanity” because El Cambio Academy thinks differently about a whole country and its people.

In other words, Uganda provides the ideal conditions for a business intended to profit from due to low or non-existing competition from other European football clubs or academies, a high number of resources which are easily accessible, and a location where laws and structures are possible to take advantage of. A perfect location for a football academy like El Cambio Academy that wishes to create professional players and sell them to the football industry in Europe.

Conclusion: It is complex

I have tried to engage critically and actively in every possible situation that I found myself in during this project. All to develop new perspectives that ultimately would create another reality for children involved with academy football. It may not be surprising that I conclude the recruitment process to be complicated when it is thought with children's rights. As I have tried to illustrate dilemmas occurs and expands as many different actors get involved along the way. From caretaker to parents, director to scouts, Ugandan to Danish coaches, everyone seems to have different motives and interest in the boy's life. Each person involved has an agenda and an interest in what could potentially become from the boy's life. Parents wish to do good for their son as well as their family, the caretaker who wants to do good for his team, family, and children, the scouts who wish to keep their job. I conclude that El Cambio Academy creates situations that increase the complexities by involving money. Up until now have intermediaries been known for financial exploitation due to their role between academies and clubs, but El Cambio Academy follows these exploitative tendencies. Despite a complicated recruitment process with money involved, I also sense hope for different future with academies and children's rights. But it requires a radically different position as I conclude that children's rights and human rights become a powerful catalyst for categorization which opens the possibility to talk about some humans as "potentially but not yet human". El Cambio Academy justify their work referring to it as help and humanitarian NGO work, but in their work also relies a fundamental assumption that these 'humans' need to become 'more human' through education, materials, football and character programs - ultimately resulting in the boys to be nothing else than a resource, a talent.

One final question

How might one live? This is the question that Deleuze and Guattari raised in their philosophical work not that many decades ago. I think this question is more relevant than ever in these days where sport, and especially football is such a strong industry (Mason et al., 2019) and also in these years where the academic focus slowly turns towards discussions of academies, recruitment, and children's rights. The academies use children's rights as a justification for their actions. In that sense, these academies implicitly privilege a particular (Western) view of what constitutes a good/the best way of living. I think it is essential that we as researcher dare to critically engage and criticize that privileged position. I actually think that we cannot avoid such engagement if we strive for responsibility in our work. I think it is crucial that we dare to ask ourselves how we want to live with football and what kind of future we want for our children if they engage with football. I hope that we never will reach a point where we accept a football industry where exploitation is a part of the game. Deleuze and Guattari did never provide any answer for the question of *how might one live?* Because they as well highlight that we need to figure the answers out ourselves. Right here and right now. And I think a good place to start is to never demand parents to hand over the responsibility of their child in the name of sport and talent development. Academies must do better.

Final perspective – a recommendation

I argue that future research could contribute with other interesting perspectives if researchers would work from a position of post qualitative research. A position in the post human could potentially shake the solid grounds both within the academic world, the football industry and the world of football academies. As said before, I do not argue that my way was the best way, but I argue that it was a way that created alternative and new perspectives both in the literature as well with the people I interacted with. I argue that discussions about children's rights and football academies have to be at the very front line for every research in this field, moving beyond these discussions seems a bit to me like turning a blind eye to something that is morally wrong but also very difficult to engage with. But if researchers strive towards responsibility (Kuntz, 2015) I argue that there is no other way than throwing ourselves into the mess and try to navigate as best as possible while trying to create new connections for a better future for our future people to come.

Engaging critically in the discussion of children's rights from a position of posthumanism has opened for new possible departure points in this field of academy football. As I wrote the discussion I came to realize and question the position itself in a geographical location of Kamwokya, Kampala. I feel it as a privilege to be able to enter such a position of posthumanism and argue for how everything in the world is entangled and related to each other, and hereby call for a larger, general, responsibility for everything in this world. But it is also a luxury that I can allow myself to think like this, because I doubt that other people have the same privileged to enter such a position due to a situation where they only can focus at feeding themselves and their kids. Although, there are indigenous philosophies that build upon the same principles as posthumanism.

A Rabbi once wrote:

We are here to make a difference... a day at the time, an act at a time, for as long as it takes to make the world a place of justice and compassion... it is by our deeds that we express our faith and make it real in the lives of others and the world (Sacks, 2005).

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