



# SAFE SPORTS

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON THE EDUCATION ON  
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE DUTCH SPORTS CONTEXT



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*“Serious sports has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence. In other words, it is war minus the shooting.” – George Orwell, December, 1945*

This quote is accurate. I know this from experience. In my career as a professional waterpolo player sports has brought me tears, bruises, and jealousy. However, I can also state that this quote is not true. Sports has also brought me friendship, compassion, love, and those benefits definitely outweigh the negatives.

During this study, I have been concerned with the topic of anti-social behaviour in sports. I have read many papers about it, looked for cases of anti-social behaviour in the media, could not stop talking about it to my friends, and even dreamt about it. Now, after eight months of research, I proudly present my master's thesis on the education on anti-social behaviour within the Dutch sports context. First of all, I want to express my sincere gratitude to a few people who have been very important in this process.

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I wish you a pleasant reading!

## Abstract

Sports is often promoted for its positive impact on people's physical health, the benefits for mental well-being, and its value to society. Yet, there is also a negative side to sports. In this qualitative-interpretive research, I explore this negative side of sports, which is characterised by integrity violations such as match fixing, doping, and anti-social behaviour, and I aim to examine how educational programs of NOC\*NSF prevent integrity violations from happening. This study provides an analysis of how educational programs provided by NOC\*NSF on anti-social behaviour contribute to a safe sports climate in the Dutch context. Through interviews, participants observation, and document analysis, the views on anti-social behaviour have been examined, the educational programs have been investigated, and the perceptions of participants on educational programs have been studied. The findings show that the educational programs of NOC\*NSF contribute, to a limited extent, to a safe sports climate by raising awareness to create a sense of responsibility for safe sports in non-athlete actors and by providing them with tools and measures to address anti-social behaviour. However, the analysis also illustrates that the contribution to a safe sports climate is limited as anti-social behaviour is defined as ambiguous and subjective, confusing both educational trainers and participants. Above that, the educational programs miss profundity. There is a need from participants for more dialogue, assignments, and cases in which the issue of anti-social behaviour is discussed. Yet, in their educational programs, NOC\*NSF avoids sensitive topics, and the underlying values, social norms, and cultural beliefs that form the antecedents of anti-social behaviour are not addressed. As a result, participants do not get enough preventive tools to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour, which has a detrimental effect on the creation and maintenance of a safe sports climate.

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## Introduction

It is common knowledge that “sports is universally promoted as the manifestation of excellence, hard work, health, fair play and equality” (Petroczi, 2009, p. 349). Unfortunately, sports also has a downside, including violations of rules, values, and norms of sport, better known as integrity violations. These violations relate to behaviour such as doping, cheating and match fixing, (sexual) abuse, and violence and intimidation. This calls for a growing emphasis on creating a safe sports climate where these types of behaviours are not tolerated. Consequently, the *Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Wetenschap en Sport*<sup>1</sup> (VWS) together with the *Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten*<sup>2</sup> (VNG) and *Vereniging Sport en Gemeenten*<sup>3</sup> (VSG) and *Nederlands Olympisch Committee\*Nederlandse Sport Federatie*<sup>4</sup> (NOC\*NSF), as the main actors within the sports scene, published the *Nationaal Sportakkoord*<sup>5</sup> in 2018. This is a policy document that strives to make the organisation and funding of sports future-proof. This means that sport should align with social developments and contribute to societal ambitions. The goal of the *Nationaal Sportakkoord* is to ensure that everyone can enjoy sports in a safe and healthy environment. In the *Nationaal Sportakkoord*, six ambitions are formulated, which should be pursued together with municipalities, provinces, the private sector, and civil society organisations. One of these ambitions is a ‘positive sports culture’, which signifies that everyone, everywhere can participate in sports in a fun, honest, and careless way. Winning and losing is part of sports but can lead to tensions. This, however, should never harm the joy of the athlete, the sporting child, and other vulnerable groups. Furthermore, discrimination and exclusion should be prevented. Wrongdoings should be avoided and the ‘bottom line’ must be guarded. The *Nationaal Sportakkoord* states that this should be done by countering sexual intimidation and abuse, developing a framework regarding minimum conditions for a positive sports culture, expanding trainings on behaviour, and continuing integrity programs focussing on doping use, match fixing, and corruption. Education and training that explicitly target maintaining a positive sports culture are thus considered crucial instruments. This includes education and training for administrators, trainers and coaches, and athletes.

Due to the growing emphasis on education on a positive sports culture, the department of governance and integrity within NOC\*NSF, the umbrella organisation for sports in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Health, Science and Sports

<sup>2</sup> Association of Dutch Municipalities

<sup>3</sup> Association of Sport and Municipalities

<sup>4</sup> Dutch Olympic Committee\*Dutch Sports Federation

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sportakkoord.nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/12/Nationaal-Sportakkoord.pdf>

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Netherlands, has expressed interest in better understanding the education and information provision on safety within the Dutch sports context. Their very practical question is: ‘how do we ensure that everyone in the sports has basic knowledge on fair and safe sports and where to find support regarding issues?’ Through this question, their underlying interest and ambition is to make sure that education and information provision fit the earlier mentioned target groups. The initial research focused on three integrity violations, namely doping, match fixing, and anti-social behaviour. However, anti-social behaviour is by far the most prominent problem with regard to integrity violations in the Dutch sports context, something I will elaborate on further in this research. Therefore, this particular study only focuses on the educational intervention strategies on anti-social behaviour.

This ethnographic research answers the following research question: “how do educational programs on anti-social behaviour contribute to a safe sports climate?” Anti-social behaviour is seen as an integrity violation. Through literature and empirical research, a definition of anti-social behaviour is given and the sports context is examined. Participant observations and interviews offer insight into how education on anti-social behaviour is constructed and explore how educational trainers and participants experience educational programs. Furthermore, the preventive and reactive measures that help create and maintain a safe sports climate are elaborated. The results of this research give a better academic understanding of how anti-social behaviour is defined by NOC\*NSF and how educational programs are constructed. Above that, it provides insight into how educational programs are perceived by non-athlete actors. Consequently, it shows how anti-social behaviour is fought against in the Dutch sports context. As a result, the findings can be used to improve education on anti-social behaviour in sports.

This study starts with a formulation of the problem, in which the issue is defined with the use of the existing literature. Furthermore, the Dutch sports context and the research population are elaborated. Next, the research question and objectives of this research are described. In the second chapter, the theoretical framework is presented in which essential concepts are explored. The third chapter includes the methodological justification, addresses the validation and the ethics of the research, and contains a reflexive discussion on the researcher’s role. The fourth chapter presents the results, in which the analysis and the resulting findings are developed. The fifth chapter includes the conclusion where the main question is answered. The sixth and final chapter concerns the discussion, where the results are elaborated in relation to the academic and practical relevance. New insights and contributions of this research to the academic field are

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presented. Furthermore, practical recommendations for NOC\*NSF are given. Last, the limitations of the study are explained.

## Problem Description

In this problem description, the concepts of integrity in sport and anti-social behaviour are shortly introduced. Next, the Dutch context is elaborated on, showing how anti-social behaviour occurs in this specific context and what is already done to prevent anti-social behaviour from happening. Last, the research population is defined.

### Academic Demarcation

In her 1995 paper, Volkswein explored integrity violations that occur in sport, especially at the top level of sports. These integrity violations relate to violence, cheating, drug use, and doping (Volkswein, 1995). A culture of fame and admiration, combined with profits and wealth, especially in professional sports, is explained to be the underlying cause. Sport actors fall into the trap of match-fixing because they are unaware of how fixers operate and the dangers that follow (Moriconi, 2020). Furthermore, the growing expectations towards athletes give them the impression that their natural abilities are not enough (McLaren, 2010). The development of unethical practices has been proven to be related to the socio-structural context of top-level sports which is based on three notions: 1) winning at all costs, 2) the overemphasis on success, and 3) the dependence on the athletes' body. Athletes need to rely on their bodies, but they can't always expect their bodies to deliver (Volkswein, 1995). These three notions all reflect the problematic sports climate and its relationship with integrity violations.

Contemporary literature on integrity in sport still mainly focuses on sportsmanship and fair competition, aiming to tackle corruption, match fixing, and doping (Gardiner, Parry, and Robinson, 2017). However, the very notion of integrity in sport is much broader. "Sports integrity refers to the broader set of moral values, norms, and rules that apply to all decisions and behaviours that take place within the context of sports – whether these directly affect the game or not" (Loyens, Claringbould, Heres – van Rossem, & van Ekeren, 2021, p. 3). Moral values in sport include "trying to be fair, helpful, and obedient, and to play properly and be sporting" (Gonçalves et al., 2010, p. 605). Yet, scholars have found that in the context of sports, behaviour and values are different from "real life," which is referred to as "bracketed morality". This improper behaviour includes cheating scandals, drugs, violence, disrespect, and other inappropriate behaviours (Doty, 2006). As integrity is constantly under construction (Loyens et

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al., 2021), the contemporary literature fails to provide a mutual understanding of all the categories of integrity violations within the sports context.

According to Kavussanu (2008, p. 124), “the social nature of sports creates the potential for cheating, lying, intimidating, and injuring other participants.” For example, the competitive nature of the sports climate is an important factor in increasing the likelihood of bullying behaviours. This can take on the form of taunting because emotions run high or can be expressed as inappropriate physical aggression (Shannon, 2013). Sports related violence is diverse and entails at least 18 behavioural components, among others, player violence, harassment, sexual assault, offences, and abuse (Young, 2019), which can have severe physical and psychological consequences for victims (Fields, Collins & Comstock, 2007). Furthermore, LGBT athletes often state that athletic environments are where they feel less safe and supported due to homophobia (Barber & Krane, 2007, p. 6) which can lead to homophobic bullying (Brackenridge, Rivers, Gough & Llewellyn, 2006). Consequently, LGBT youth will be less likely to participate in sports.

Besides bullying and violence, the culture of sport has often been blamed for its high tolerance of sexual exploitation (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001, p. 67). Abused victims often lack the language or conceptual tools to recognise or define what is happening to them. Victims are vulnerable because they have few friends, have poor relationships with their parents and/or have an isolated position in the team. The perpetrators strengthen this isolation (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001, p. 69). Despite the fact that sexual exploitation in sports is common, there seems to be a gap in the existing literature concerning sexuality and gender-related issues in the sports context (van der Steeg, Schipper-van Veldhoven, Cense, Bellemans & de Martelaer, 2020). Topics such as sexism, privacy violations, and inappropriate physical and sexual behaviour are frequently missing in integrity policies and discussions, both in sports organisations (Parent & Demers, 2011) and in sports education (van der Steeg, et al., 2020). There seems to be a tension with regard to discussing sexual integrity topics. On the one hand, there is a need among coaches for guidelines and competence development with regard to sexual integrity issues. On the other hand, there is a reluctance to discuss sexual integrity topics in sport contexts. Coaches feel a certain degree of restraint or fear when they are confronted with issues such as privacy, physical contact, sexual and gender diversity, and sexual behaviour. The most recent research on this issue argues that they rather focus on avoiding risks than supporting a positive sports context (van der Steeg et al., 2020).

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What seems to lack even more within the academic field is research on other forms of emotional abuse within the sports context. Reasons for this could be that abusive behaviour is hard to define, making identification, prevention, and intervention difficult. Other reasons for the lack of research are related to the cultural acceptance of psychological violence, the fact that violators often do not intend to harm someone, and because there seems to be no urgency to address the problem (Stirling & Kerr, 2008). Manoli, Bandura, and Downward (2020) go as far as to argue that morality in sports is often absent. They clearly state that “the lack of integrity is almost accepted as an integral part of sport nowadays” (Manoli et al., 2020, p. 212). People have become ignorant of the lack of integrity because of the number of integrity violations and because sports actors are unable to address the problem. Thus, this research project is positioned precisely within the academic conversation on integrity violations and how these violations are addressed in the Dutch sports context.

The acknowledgement for a positive sports culture in the Dutch context is gaining attention, yet the number of cases and reports of integrity issues is increasing. The annual report<sup>6</sup> (2019) of Centrum Veilige Sport Nederland<sup>7</sup> (CVSN), part of NOC\*NSF, shows that in 2019, 712 case files were made, including reports and consultancy questions, compared to 478 cases in 2018. Table 1 shows the number of cases per category in 2019.

Category	Cases
Transgressive behaviour	482
Doping	17
Match-fixing and gambling	4
Integrity	19
Other	183
Not specified	7

Table 1. Cases of integrity violations

This table shows that NOC\*NSF makes a distinction between doping, match fixing, integrity, and transgressive behaviour. Above that, the results of this annual report present that there is an extensive growth of reports on integrity issues. A vast majority of the incidents reported are related to what is labeled as ‘transgressive behaviour’, of which 241 case files had a sexual component.

<sup>6</sup> <https://nocnsf.nl/media/3735/04a-jaarverslag-cvsn-2019.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Centrum Safe Sports Netherlands

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Additionally, there have been many reports about integrity issues in newspapers in the last couple of months. The most well-known case of anti-social behaviour in the Netherlands is the case of the gymnastics federation. The rapport ‘Ongelijke leggers’<sup>8</sup> shows that two out of three former athletes have experienced forms of anti-social behaviour, such as intimidation, manipulation, blackmail, and isolation. Discrimination within the soccer context is also gaining extreme media attention<sup>9</sup>, pointing towards the urgency of the problem. Just last week, a survey from the Mulier Institute revealed that one out of five professional soccer players senses a taboo on discussing prejudice<sup>10</sup>. Another research from the Mulier institute shows that six out of ten transgender people have to deal with negative behaviour.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, a study carried out by NOC\*NSF shows that 72% of the people in the age category 18-50 have experienced anti-social behaviour in sports in their youth.<sup>12</sup> Society-wide, the MeToo movement is also gaining increasing attention. MeToo is an initiative against sexual intimidation, harassment, and assault, especially within the power relations of the work- or educational environment. This is an affront to human dignity and often involves violence against women and minors<sup>13</sup>. In sports, the MeToo movement is also receiving attention (Reel & Cource, 2019). Hartman-Tews (2021) shows that the survivors and victims of gender-based violence are often silenced by coaches, members of sports organisations, and even parents and siblings. This illustrates the taboo on speaking up about anti-social behaviour that is still present within the sports context.

This growing amount of cases points us to a problem regarding the safety of participants within the current sports climate. Moreover, the increasing emphasis on integrity in policies and the question from NOC\*NSF concerning the education on integrity shows a need to increase the awareness of integrity in sports. Mountjoy, Vertommen, Burrows, and Greinig (2018) emphasise that athletes often lack an understanding of what safe sports entails. They found that elite young athletes from around the world have a poor understanding of the concept of harassment and abuse in sport. Above that, sports organisations show a low level of awareness of gender-based violence in sport (Hartman-Tews, 2021). According to Mountjoy et al (2018) this knowledge gap can most likely be attributed to the lack of exposure to educational

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<sup>8</sup> [https://dutchgymnastics.nl/assets/Documenten/Veilig-sporten/Verinorm/Verinorm\\_Ongelijke\\_leggers\\_rapport.pdf](https://dutchgymnastics.nl/assets/Documenten/Veilig-sporten/Verinorm/Verinorm_Ongelijke_leggers_rapport.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://nos.nl/video/2393547-bananen-oerwoudgeluiden-en-spreekkoren-zichtbaar-racisme-in-betaald-voetbal>

<sup>10</sup> <https://nos.nl/artikel/2393544-peiling-profvoetballers-een-vijfde-ervaart-taboe-op-bespreken-vooroordelen>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.trouw.nl/sport/zes-op-de-tien-transgenders-voelen-zich-wel-eens-onveilig-op-sportclub-bbcbcf54/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ad.nl/andere-sporten/grensoverschrijdend-gedrag-in-jeugdsport-komt-nog-te-vaak-voor-a10fe392/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.amnesty.nl/encyclopedie/metoo-en-mensenrechten>

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initiatives on the subject. They underscore the need to develop validated interventions strategies targeted at “elite youth athletes to increase their understanding of harassment and abuse in sport” (p.181).

In fact, in recent years, awareness and prevention campaigns have become important intervention strategies for sport governance bodies and sports federations to tackle integrity violations (Moriconi, 2020). However, even though there seems to be a growing emphasis on integrity policies and instruments, the knowledge of their actual effects is still limited (Huberts, 2018). Furthermore, van der Steeg et al. (2020) call for more attention on learning, growth, and development when it comes to integrity issues. Moreover, McCloughan, Mattey, and Hanrahan (2015) emphasise the need for education in the prevention and management of homophobic bullying in sports. It is thus necessary to learn about what is done right now with regard to education on integrity and how training and educational programs are contributing to a safe sports climate. Consequently, this research contributes to the body of knowledge on the content, perceptions, and effects of education on integrity on sports actors.

This is even more important given that a report from the research commission sexual intimidation and abuse in sport,<sup>14</sup> published in 2017, shows that it is not easy to make a policy and implement this. Information about the policy gets stuck between different organisations and therefore does not reach everyone. The data seems to be too difficult, too large, or too laborious for voluntary organisations. Furthermore, the report asks whether people have the time and motivation to delve into the information without an acute cause. Sports clubs only have a superficial knowledge of the policy and measures for prevention. Research shows that only 16% of the athletes knew about the confidentiality contact person, someone in the sports club where people can go when they have questions regarding anti-social behaviour. This seems to be caused by the fact that a majority of sports organisations do not have the capacity to process large amounts of information. The volunteers, board members, and supervisors in sports clubs are already busy enough running the sports club.

## Research population

The Netherlands counts 26.000 sports clubs<sup>15</sup>, and in 2019 4.270.000 people were members at one or multiple sports clubs<sup>16</sup>. Numerous organisations are involved in the education and

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.kennisbanksportenbewegen.nl/?file=8265&m=1513073386&action=file.download>

<sup>15</sup> [mulierinstituut.nl/onderzoeksthemas/aanbieders/](http://mulierinstituut.nl/onderzoeksthemas/aanbieders/)

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.kenniscentrumsportenbewegen.nl/kennisbank/publicaties/?zo-sport-nederland&kb\\_id=25457&kb\\_q=](https://www.kenniscentrumsportenbewegen.nl/kennisbank/publicaties/?zo-sport-nederland&kb_id=25457&kb_q=)

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information provision on integrity in sports, the majority of them being either public organisations or civil society organisations. Table 2 is included to provide a broad overview of the organisations involved in the education on anti-social behaviour.

Organisation	Format	Target group	Themes addressed in educational programs
<b>Centrum Veilige Sport Nederland (NOC*NSF)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-learnings</li> <li>• Webinars</li> <li>• Seminars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes</li> <li>• Trainer/ Coaches</li> <li>• Directors</li> </ul>	Bullying, sexual intimidation and abuse, social security in times of the coronavirus, match fixing, doping, integrity, discrimination, transgressive behaviour
<b>TeamNL Centre (NOC*NSF)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• 1 on 1 coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes</li> <li>• Trainer/coaches</li> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Supporting staff</li> </ul>	Ant-social behaviour
<b>Academie voor Sportkader (NOC*NSF)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspirational sessions</li> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Masterclass</li> <li>• E-leanings</li> <li>• Webinar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainer/coaches</li> <li>• Administrators</li> <li>• Referees</li> </ul>	Trainer guidance, volunteer management, member retention, and recognizing transgressive behaviour
<b>Municipal Sports Companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes</li> <li>• Trainer/ Coaches</li> <li>• Directors</li> <li>• Parents</li> </ul>	Broad range of topics
<b>Civil Society Organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Information sessions</li> <li>• Discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport clubs</li> </ul>	Anti-social behaviour, sexual intimidation, and sexual, physical and, mental abuse

Table 2. Organisations involved in the education on integrity

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In this study, the focus lies on education provided by NOC\*NSF. The association NOC\*NSF was created by the merger of the Netherlands Olympic Committee and the Netherlands Sports Federation in 1993. NOC\*NSF is the bundling of organised sports in the Netherlands. NOC\*NSF is a membership organisation, with a board, a management, and a general assembly. NOC\*NSF includes 93 member sports organisations, representing nearly 24000 sports clubs and a total of 5 200 000 organised athletes. According to their statutes, NOC\*NSF purpose is to promote that as many inhabitants of the Netherlands as possible can practice sport or be involved in a sport in a responsible way, to propagate the meaning of sport within society, to bundle and promote the interests of Dutch sport, to propagate and promote the Olympic Movement and its objectives, in accordance with the regulations established by the International Olympic Committee<sup>17</sup>. As shown in table 2 above, NOC\*NSF has multiple divisions that provide education on anti-social behaviour, namely *Centrum Veilige Sport Nederland* (CVSN), TeamNL centres, and *NOC\*NSF Academie voor Sportkader*.

### Centrum Veilige Sport Nederland

Centrum Veilige Sport Nederland (CVSN) started as part of the Unit Corporate Affairs of NOC\*NSF and within that as an implementing organisation of the Integrity and Governance team. In December 2019, it was decided to make CVNS its own team within Corporate Affairs so that it can continue to grow separately from the policy issues of the Integrity and Governance team. CVSN is managed by a coordinator who implements the recommendations of the investigation of the De Vries Committee, a committee that studies sexual intimidation and abuse in sports. The coordinator is also the theme expert in the field of anti-social behaviour for the Integrity and Governance Team<sup>18</sup>.

### TeamNL Centre

In the Netherlands, there are five TeamNL centres that provide high-quality facilities and services for the (talent) TeamNL programs under the direction of the relevant sports associations. The TeamNL centres include facilities such as training accommodation, housing, nutrition, and education, and specialist support such as (para)medical supervision, strength and conditioning, nutritional guidance, and top-level sports life skills coaching, meaning that athletes are coached on the subject of performance behaviour and personal growth. In these

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<sup>17</sup> [https://nocnsf.nl/media/2929/04a2-jaarverslag-2019\\_def.pdf](https://nocnsf.nl/media/2929/04a2-jaarverslag-2019_def.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <https://nocnsf.nl/media/3735/04a-jaarverslag-cvsn-2019.pdf>

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recurring conversations with talents and professional athletes, life skill coaches offer tools to deal with any problems or issues.<sup>19</sup>

### NOC\*NSF Academie voor Sportkader

The Academy for Sports Management was founded by sports associations in 2009. It has been educating trainers, coaches, administrators, and referees in sport. Themes include trainer guidance, volunteer management, member retention, and recognising anti-social behaviour. Providers of education on anti-social behaviour organise seminars and inspirational sessions. Due to COVID-19, the educational sessions and seminars are organised online. Besides educational sessions, CVSN provides e-learning activities, which are online activities that can be executed by everyone at any time. These online courses are free of charge.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://papendal.nl/topsport/teamnl-centrum/voorzieningen-en-begeleiding/lifeskills-coaching/>

## Objectives

In this section, I present my personal objectives, practical objectives, and the intellectual objectives of this study.

### Personal Objectives

I am strongly invested in this research as I am a professional athlete, and therefore sports plays a significant role in my life. However, I have never had any training with regard to anti-social behaviour. Still, I do believe that it is vital for athletes, coaches, and other non-athlete actors, participating at all levels of sport, to learn more about integrity in sports, especially about anti-social behaviour. I know from experience that anti-social behaviour often occurs within the sports context. For example, when I played for the Dutch national youth waterpolo team I had a coach who, a few years later, has been convicted for sexual abuse with a few of my former teammates<sup>20</sup>. When this became known, I, my parents, and my teammates were not that surprised as we had always had some suspicions. Yet, we never did anything about it as we did no know what to do. Therefore, we ignored the problem. Consequently, I believe that education about this topic can provide tools and information to athletes and non-athletes about what to do when they suspect anti-social behaviour. Above that, I find it hard to distinguish when something is anti-social behaviour and when it is not. In engaging with this research, I thus hope to learn more about what anti-social behaviour within the sports context entails. Moreover, I hope that I can make a change myself with the knowledge that I have gained. When I recognise any form of anti-social behaviour in the future, I hope I am confident enough and able to respond to this in the right way.

### Practical Objectives

This research gives insight into how education on anti-social behaviour contributes to the creation, maintenance, and improvement of a safe sports climate. First, the antecedents of anti-social behaviour are investigated. By knowing how anti-social behaviour occurs within the sports context, NOC\*NSF can better tailor their educational programs on the causes of anti-social behaviour and, by addressing the causes of anti-social behaviour, prevent anti-social behaviour from happening. Furthermore, different pieces of training and educational programs from various organisations are explored to get an understanding of the topics, content, and methods used in educational programs on integrity and their effects on or relevance for participants. By also including the experiences of participants following these educational

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.telegraaf.nl/nieuws/483669589/6-jaarcel-voor-gevallen-waterpolocoach-koen-p>

## Introduction

trainings, the reception of information and the perception of participants of these programs can be investigated. This information can then be used to improve the training and educational programs and make these programs better fit their target groups. With the results of this study, I develop practical recommendations for NOC\*NSF in order for them to improve their educational programs. Moreover, with these insights, potential collaborations and partnerships can be explored, and an integrated approach towards education on integrity may be established, as is the long-term ambition of NOC\*NSF.

### Intellectual objectives

The topic of integrity in sports has received increased interest within the academic context. There is, however, a lack of a universal definition of integrity in sport (Manoli, 2019). Therefore, more research is needed to create an understanding of the issue of integrity in sports. Above that, the available literature on a safe sports climate is often related to research on motivational factors. The relation between a safe sports climate and integrity has not yet been made within the academic field. This research explores the gap in the existing literature on the relationship between a safe sports climate and integrity. As established earlier, the annual report<sup>21</sup> of CVS/N shows that the majority of cases made in 2019 are related to transgressive behaviour, in the literature defined as anti-social behaviour. However, much of the existing literature on integrity in sports still focuses on doping and match-fixing. For many reasons, academics so far have failed to establish one general definition of anti-social behaviour. This research contributes to the knowledge on anti-social behaviour and gives more insight into what anti-social behaviour in the sports context entails. Furthermore, it provides an analysis of how education on this specific integrity issue is given to participants and how education is perceived by participants. Therefore, this study adds to the body of knowledge on education on integrity. Moreover, there has been some explorative research on the prevention of integrity scandals through education. Still, the effects of education have not yet been examined. This research is one of the first to explore the added value of training and education on integrity in sport. The qualitative component of the study adds depth as the experiences of participants are examined.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://nocnsf.nl/media/3735/04a-jaarverslag-cvsn-2019.pdf>

## Research Questions

This study answers the following main research question: “**how do educational programs on anti-social behaviour contribute to a safe sports climate?**” This main research question is responded to through the three sub-questions explained underneath.

### 1. How is anti-social behaviour defined by the management of NOC\*NSF and educational trainers of educational programs?

First, I look at how NOC\*NSF and its educational trainers define anti-social behaviour. This creates an understanding of the issue of anti-social behaviour and the scope of the problem. Above that, I explore the Dutch sports context and find out what the antecedents of anti-social behaviour are. This is important as the educational programs aim to prevent anti-social behaviour. Therefore the programs need to tackle these causes of anti-social behaviour.

### 2. How are educational programs on anti-social behaviour constructed?

Through this question, I create an understanding of how educational programs are constructed. This means that I look at the target groups of educational programs, which tells me who NOC\*NSF holds responsible for creating and maintaining a safe sports climate. Furthermore, I find out what topics are discussed in the educational trainings. This provides me with an understanding of whether the educational programs tackle the problem that NOC\*NSF sketches. Moreover, I look at what methods and materials are used in the educational programs to convey information about anti-social behaviour and safe sports. Above that, I examine if NOC\*NSF provides participants with materials that can contribute to a safe sports climate.

### 3. How are educational programs perceived by non-athlete actors?

This last question provides insight into the opinions on and experiences of non-athletes actors that participated in the educational programs. By answering this question, I learn whether participants gather information and tools from the educational programs that can help them in creating and maintaining a safe sports climate. Above that, I look at what methods participants found useful in transmitting knowledge. Moreover, I examine if participants would recommend the educational program to others, as this says a lot about the value of the educational programs.

## Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the most important studies, theories, and concepts that are relevant for the analysis of the results of this study. In the first section, I explain how integrity in sport is defined. In the second section, I elaborate on the ethical environment which is crucial for understanding how anti-social behaviour in sports occurs. In the third section, I illustrate how anti-social behaviour is conceptualised within the sports context. In the last section, I present how anti-social behaviour in the sports context can be prevented through awareness campaigns and education.

### Integrity in Sports

The term integrity in sport is used differently by various actors in and beyond the sports industry (Gardiner, Parry & Robinson, 2017). Still, the existing literature on integrity can give guidance. Gilbert and Skinner (in Gardiner, Parry, and Robinson 2017, p. 8) explain how integrity may be displayed in the sports context:

“Integrity in sport is displayed through quality leadership practices that embrace the spirit and purity of sport, transparent governance structures that strengthen public trust and beliefs systems that create ethical, moral and value laden decision-making processes that sustain sport from community to elite levels in creating a better society.”

More academics have defined integrity in sport. Van der Steeg et al. (2020, p. 8) state: “from a sports perspective, integrity is a multidimensional, moral, and relational concept that involves several key elements: awareness, respect, consistency, honesty, transparency, independence, commitment, and accountability.” Loyens et al., (2021, p. 3) describe that “sports integrity refers to the broader set of moral values, norms, and rules that apply to all decisions and behaviours that take place within the context of sports – whether these directly affect the game or not.” Values are the principles that carry a certain weight in one’s choice of action. Norms indicate morally correct behaviour in a specific situation. Values and norms then guide action and provide a moral basis to justify or evaluate what one does and who one is. (Lasthuizen, Huberts and Heres 2011, p. 387) The collection of these values and norms functioning as standards for assessing the integrity of one’s conduct is called ethics. (Lasthuizen, Huberts and Heres 2011, p. 387)

It is often thought that morally bad actions result from three sources, namely good people making mistakes, good people having weakness of will, or bad people choosing to do evil. This behaviour can be tackled by helping good people avoid mistakes, have their will strengthened, and by deciding what is the appropriate punishment. However, ethical problems also arise from the culture in which other values are prioritised over ethical values. If this is the case, people will make ‘correct’ choices that are still ethically problematic. The choices are unethical because they violate accepted moral principles or produce ethically undesirable outcomes as seen from the outside environment. However, the choices are seen as correct by the inside environment as their choices are consistent with its internal norms, goals, and beliefs. (Meyers, 2004).

### The Ethical Environment of the Sports Context

The inside environment in which those norms, goals, and beliefs apply can also be defined as the ethical environment. According to Blackburn (in Haydon, 2004), the ethical environment:

*“Determines what we find acceptable or unacceptable, admirable or contemptible ... our conception of when things are going well and when they are going badly ... our conception of what is due to us, and what is due from us, as we relate to others ... what is a cause of pride or shame, or anger or gratitude, or what can be forgiven and what cannot.”* (Blackburn, 2001, p. 1 in Haydon, 2004).

This means that the ethical environment stipulates what someone thinks, someone’s emotional responses, and motivations to action. In other words, it makes behaviour meaningful. Ethical environments are differentiated by what they give salience to and what they prioritise (Haydon, 2004). The unique socio-cultural context that sports environments have offers possibilities for athlete abuse and exploitation (McMahon, Knight & McGannon, 2018). Moreover, Vertommen et al. (2016, p. 224) state that “competitive sport is characterised by unique structures and cultures.” This means that random incidents of physical violence and injuries are often tolerated as it is seen as part of the game. Furthermore, competitive sport entails unequal relationships between coaches and athletes and consists of a culture associated with authoritarian leadership and a male-dominated gender ratio. Moreover, physical contact is often seen as necessary, and reward structures are common (Vertommen et al., 2016).

Kavussanu (2019) states that the social environment of sports consists of ‘motivational’ and ‘moral’ features. First, The motivational features are distinguished in the motivational climate

and the interpersonal coaching style or coaching climate. The motivational climate involves the criteria of success communicated to athletes by significant others. These people determine the evaluation procedures and distribution of rewards and, through their behaviour convey to the athletes what is valued in that context. In a performance motivational climate, only top athletes are rewarded, and only normative feedback is given. By contrast, in a mastery motivational climate, personal progress is valued, and individual effort and improvement are rewarded. Antisocial behaviour appears to be more common in a performance motivational climate. The second motivational feature, the coaching style, is a construct derived from the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The interpersonal coaching style can either be controlling or autonomy-supportive (Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011). When a coach has a controlling coaching style, she/he uses coercive practices and extrinsic rewards for performance. They behave in an authoritarian way, have a preconceived way of thinking and behaving on their athletes, and use methods such as manipulation, guilt, obedience, induction, and controlling competence feedback. These behaviours cause antisocial behaviour towards teammates and opponents. On the other hand, when a coach uses an autonomy-supportive coaching style the antisocial behaviours in a team decrease. This coaching style gives athletes a provided choice and rationale for tasks, opportunities to show initiative and independent work, athletes get non-controlling competence feedback and acknowledgement for their feelings, together with a lack of guilt-inducing criticism and overt control. Second, with moral features, Kavassanu (2019) means the moral atmosphere or team norms, which they define as “a set of collective norms regarding moral action on the part of the group members.” Group members develop a shared understanding of what is appropriate behaviour in that context. This shared understanding is the defining characteristic of the moral atmosphere. In studies on moral atmosphere and aggression, it has been shown that when teammates or coaches behave aggressively in a situation, the athlete is also likely to behave aggressively (Kavussanu, 2019).

The ethical environment can also be linked to the concept of morality, which includes “norms, behavioural models, virtues and values that characterize a society” (Besio & Pronzini, 2014, 289). Van de Pol, Kavussanu, and Claessens (2020) define two dimensions of morality, namely prosocial behaviour and anti-social behaviour. Prosocial behaviour refers to “voluntary behaviour intended to help or benefit others” (p. 240), whereas antisocial behaviour includes “voluntary acts intended to harm or disadvantage someone” (p. 240). The competitive context of sports makes that anti-social behaviour is sooner justified as it is seen as an acceptable means to reach a target, for example, winning (van de Pol et al., 2020). Consequently, this context can

## Theoretical Framework

serve as an occasion for using mechanisms of moral disengagement, which shifts how people construe potentially immoral choices (Moore et al., 2018; van de Pool et al., 2020). Moral disengagement refers to eight psychological mechanisms that reduce guilt and other negative emotions that suppress anti-social behaviour (Kavussanu, 2019). The specific sports context poses moral dilemmas between individuals and groups regarding principles of care and harm, fairness and cheating, and loyalty and betrayal. Yet, athletes seem to be more egocentric in their moral reasoning (Kavussanu & Ring, 2015), which is the cognitive process used to evaluate a moral dilemma before the behavioural response. Moral reasoning is shaped by personal and group perceptions of morality. The moral reasoning of athletes has been proven to be lower in sports context than in non-sport context and lower compared to nonathletes (Shrout et al., 2017). This phenomenon is known as ‘bracketed morality’, meaning the more egocentric moral reasoning, also known as game reasoning, in sports compared to everyday life (Kavussanu & Ring, 2015). In their study on moral behaviour towards teammates and opponents in sport and towards other students at university, Kavussanu and Ring (2015) found evidence for game reasoning. Harm was judged to be less wrong in sports, whereas a lack of caring was found to be less wrong. Anti-social behaviour was found to be more acceptable in sports than in university.

## Anti-Social Behaviour in the Sports Context

There is not one common definition of anti-social behaviour in sport. The existing literature shows that anti-social can be about negative interpersonal consequences or the violations of fair play. Some authors express that anti-social behaviour involves aggression, match fixing, athlete abuse, and harassment. Such behaviours can also be defined as maltreatment, which are “volitional acts that result in or have the potential to result in physical injuries and/or psychological harm” (Stirling, 2008, p. 1091). However, in this research, I use the broad definition of antisocial behaviour proposed by Benson and Bruner (2017, p. 120), who state that antisocial behaviour refers to “acts that are harmful or put others at a disadvantage”. There are multiple ways to harm someone, which is often a result of abuse and exploitation. Current studies often use the terms harassment, abuse, and bullying interchangeably (Stirling, 2008). Abuse comes in three forms, namely emotional, physical and sexual abuse. “Emotional abuse is a pattern of deliberate noncontact behaviours by a person within a critical relationship role that has the potential to be harmful” (Stirling & Kerr, 2008, p. 179). Emotional abuse is seen as necessary in order to produce successful athletic performance (Stirling & Kerr, 2008) and is reported more by elite level athletes (Kerr & Stirling, 2008). Emotional abuse is therefore

normalised, as is the case for physical abuse and violence. Examples of physical abuse are excessive intensive training or being made to train when sick or injured. “Sexual abuse is coerced collaboration in sexual acts involving manipulation or constraint. It can be expressed through exchanges of reward or privilege for sexual favours, forced sexual activity, rape or sexual assault, groping, etc” (Parent, 2009, p. 323). It is often related to coaches abusing their position of power (McMahon, Knight, & McGannon, 2018). The culture of sport has been blamed for its high tolerance of sexual exploitation. Abused victims often lack the language or conceptual apparatus to recognise or define what is happening to them. Victims are vulnerable because they have few friends, have poor relationships with their parents and/or have an isolated position in the team. The perpetrators strengthen this isolation. (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001) Stirling (2008) also mentions harassment and bullying as maltreatment. Harassment is unwanted or coerced behaviour that violates an individual’s human rights. “Bullying includes physical, verbal or psychological attacks or intimidations that are intended to cause fear, distress or harm to the victim” (Stirling, 2008, p. 1097). It is also often a result of an unequal power relationship.

## Education on Integrity

In order to tackle integrity violations from happening, the morality within the sports context must change. Haydon (2004) states that the ethical environment is able to change and that we need to sustain a healthy ethical environment but wonders where the responsibility for this lies. One answer to this comes from the sociocultural/dialogical approach that offers a shared vision of moral development. This approach sets an understanding of a moral community, which is a community that consists of “dialogical selves engaged in an ongoing process of interpretation, and committed, necessarily to dialogue, discussion and mutual exchange across differences” (Tappan, 2005, p. 367). Values about sport are formed in early life and determine attitudes and behaviour in later stages of life. This means that by targeting sport values, interventions could be productive in preventing unethical behaviour. Furthermore, public attitudes and social norms should also be targeted in the design of intervention campaigns. Cultural beliefs and expectations shape social norms and behaviour is guided by social norms. Benson and Ross (1998) incorporate a model of successful cultural change. Organisations seem to change their ethical conduct as part of their culture when the organisation has been punished for actual or alleged ethical violations, when management strongly endorses ethical conduct as the expected way to do one’s job and encourages employees to ask questions if they aren’t certain whether an act they are contemplating is ethical, and when management creates a formal program to

## Theoretical Framework

encourage internal whistleblowing (Benson & Ross, 1998, p. 1521). In the previous section I have, however, shown that the ethical environment of the sports context differs from other contexts, for example, a school context. Because of these differences in context, educational programs must be appropriately tailored to the context of sports (McCloughan et al., 2015). This section presents the existing literature on education and awareness campaigns aimed at preventing integrity violations in the sports context.

Sports organisations can apply policy strategies and tools to prevent integrity violations and effectively address violations when they occur. Effective integrity management involves four stages: 1) determining and defining integrity, 2) guiding people towards integrity, 3) monitoring integrity, and 4) enforcing integrity. The education of sport managers, directors, and volunteers is vital in guiding them towards integrity, especially when they are morally unaware of integrity violations (Robertson & Constandt, 2021). Awareness and prevention campaigns often go hand in hand with education in order to provide knowledge and/or skills that increase the capacity and competence to act on those targeted by the message (Randolph & Viswanath, 2004). Contemporary literature shows that awareness and prevention campaigns have become important means for sport governance bodies and sports federations to fight integrity scandals. Through these awareness campaigns, sports actors receive practical tools and information to recognise, resist, and report integrity violations (Moriconi, 2020). The literature on awareness campaigns for the public sector can teach us more about effectively targeting a large audience in order to change behaviour. Awareness campaigns have been extensively used by public organisations with regard to health topics. These campaigns can be seen as similar to awareness campaigns on sports integrity as they often use the power of social norms to shape behavioural tendencies (Barkoukis et al., 2016). In their article on communicating about child sexual abuse through public awareness campaigns, Kemshall and Moulden (2017) refer to Tamale (2013), who states that “awareness aims to inform, highlight, or draw attention to a specific issue and to inspire others to act in desired ways” (Kemshall & Moulden, 2017, p. 126). Messages, information, knowledge, and skills are transmitted to particular communities or specific groups. This can be done through media such as television networks, radio stations, and newspapers. Time in the media can be bought or donated (Randolph & Viswanath, 2004). Another way to spread a message is by using “champions” or “grassroots,” which are community leaders that spread a message and reach or influence people who might otherwise not get the message. Maintaining the impact of the message might involve long-term work with important groups to

transfer knowledge or skills or to behold the behaviour change over the long term (Kemshall & Moulden, 2017).

Another way in which the prevention of integrity violations is pursued is by raising awareness through evidence-based training and educational programs (Mountjoy et al., 2016). According to Mountjoy et al. (2016, p. 1025), “education should be the cornerstone of any safe sports strategy.” Culturally tailored education for athletes, parents, athlete entourage, fans, sponsors, and sports administrators is needed to eliminate ethical and integrity issues in sport. By targeting all levels of sports organisations, every stakeholder gains the necessary understanding and knowledge to overcome denial and implement prevention solutions (Mountjoy et al., 2016). Although the contribution of integrity education is not clear, Robertson and Constandt (2021, p. 10) state that “training and education can offer an alternative pathway to guide sports managers towards integrity.” They claim that educating key personnel is necessary as their behaviour can create a motivational climate that reduces moral disengagement and encourages responsibility. Indeed, especially facilitators and coaches seem to play an essential role in the process of establishing a safe space (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2015). Coaches are important role models in athletes’ lives (Griffin, Perrotti, Priest & Muska, 2002, p. 9). They strongly influence their athletes’ behaviours, and the main consensus is that what a coach says carries significant weight for athletes. Facilitators and coaches can be ethical leaders who are characterised as “honest, caring, and principled individuals who make fair and balanced decisions” (Kar, 2014, p. 113). Ethical leaders are both moral persons and moral managers. The moral person represents someone who shows concern for others and is approachable. A moral manager is someone who patterns their behaviour and organisational processes to meet moral standards. An ethical leader is someone who will listen and act on the problems and concerns of his/her followers (Burton, Peachey & Wells, 2017). Transformational and charismatic leaders make people want to identify with them and replicate their behaviours and aspirations (Segal, 2013). Ethical leadership, defined as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships and the promotion of conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making” (Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005, p. 120 in Moore et al., 2018), influences moral behaviour. Ethical leadership decreases moral disengagement and thereby affects unethical decision-making and deviant behaviour (Moore et al., 2018).

In order to affect behaviour, coaches need to understand what happens in their athletes’ minds. This way, they can promote personal development and overcome situations in which athletes

are faced with ethical challenges (Noguiera et al., 2018). Yet, coaches often lack the knowledge of how and where to start creating change, also because the issue of anti-social behaviour is often not spoken about (Barber & Krane, 2007). Barber & Krane, 2017) call this the ‘ubiquity of silence’, which can be addressed through an open dialogue. Consequently, coaches needed to be educated about anti-social behaviour. Shannon (2013) recommends that in order to prevent bullying, staff must be educated on what bullying is, how to recognise it, and what they should do when bullying occurs. Furthermore, knowledge and skills training aimed at the prevention of child sexual abuse has been proven to increase participants' knowledge, confidence, and sense of responsibility to report suspicious behaviour (van der Steeg et al., 2020). Although academics show the need for integrity training for coaches and facilitators, there is a lack of literature on the actual existence and impact of educational programs for these target groups.

Besides educating coaches, it is also necessary to educate parents (McMahon, Knight & McGannon, 2018) and to implement an athlete educational program (van der Steeg et al., 2020). Barkoukis (2013) proposes moral training for young athletes where they get taught about concepts of morality in sports and fair play. He suggests implementing prevention interventions for doping use, especially focused on athletes who have never used doping before. Nevertheless, there is an academic debate on whether ethics education is effective in changing attitudes as some studies state that ethics courses had no effect on the attitude, whereas others suggest a significant change in attitude after attending a course (Warnick & Silverman, 2011). In light of the growing importance of education on integrity, Segal (2013) proposes three objectives for a sports integrity course. First, ethics courses must enhance the awareness of and sensitivity to moral consequences of decisions. Participants develop empathy, become aware of their personal responsibility and moral obligation, and learn about scandals, laws, and rules. Second, moral development should be promoted. This means that participants learn to define whether a course of action is morally right. The higher the level of moral reasoning, the less vulnerable they are to situational pressures to behave unethically. Third, participants get taught skills and tools to handle situational pressures. They learn about what to expect, how to respond, and whom to call (Segal, 2013). Ethics educational programs seem to be most effective when they include groups discussion or real-life cases (Warnick & Silverman, 2011). Segal (2013) provides three methods for ethics courses; simulations and role-play, case-based discussion, and inspiring students with role models and charismatic leaders. Simulations and role-play are currently often missing from integrity courses. Students deepen their appreciation for moral behaviour as they go beyond learning the rules and focus on caring about principles and doing

what is right. They learn about the consequences of their decisions and how these decisions can weaken their integrity. Case-based discussions provide ethical discussions, promote self-awareness, and creates higher levels of moral judgement. Case-based discussion are proven to be far more effective than lectures as they engage students. Letting role models and charismatic people speak to students inspires them and elevates students' values. Research shows that by inviting such people to speak to them, athletes got the courage to stand up to match fixing. Finally, an accessible language repertoire and an ongoing dialogue are essential (van der Steeg et. al., 2020).

### Safe Space in Sports

The previous paragraphs show that “integrity is fundamental to ensure that sport is a safe, fair, and inclusive activity” (Robertson & Constandt, 2021, p. 1) and that integrity courses can contribute to changing morality and thus the ethical environment. “All athletes have the right to safe sports” (Mountjoy et al., 2018, p. 176), in which safe sports is defined as “an athletic environment that is respectful, equitable and free from all forms of non-accidental violence to athletes” (Mountjou et al., 2016). Sports organisations have a moral, ethical, and legal duty to protect the health and well-being of people in sport and to create a safe environment (Mountjoy, Rhind, Tiivas & Leglise, 2015). The International Olympic Committee Code of Ethics<sup>22</sup> (2020) includes, among others, the following fundamental principles:

*“Ensuring the participants’ conditions of safety, well-being and medical care favourable to their physical and mental equilibrium (...) to ensure respect for human dignity (...) rejection of discrimination of any kind on whatever grounds (...) and rejection of harassment and abuse, be it physical, professional, or sexual, and any physical or mental injuries.”*

These principles can be linked to the concept of a ‘safe space’, which means that when individuals can freely participate and express their identities and individuality without fear of physical or psychological danger, censure, exclusion, or exploitation” (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014, p. 634). According to these authors, a safe space is critical to the provision of inclusive and fair sports opportunities and to gain the positive social impacts that can flow from those opportunities. Creating an inclusive environment protects all participants, teaches about life lessons, improves health benefits, and enhances performances (Barber & Krane, 2007). Yet, the

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<sup>22</sup> [https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/Documents/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-ENG.pdf?\\_ga=2.135440497.1961294067.1629489046-1683333541.1629489046](https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/Documents/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-ENG.pdf?_ga=2.135440497.1961294067.1629489046-1683333541.1629489046)

## Theoretical Framework

question remains who is responsible for creating a safe space. The existing literature on integrity education mainly focuses on athletes or, in other educational contexts, students. However, according to Mountjoy et al. (2015), sports organisations have a duty to create a safe environment. More precisely, it is “the responsibility of leaders in organised sport to create a safe climate” (Vertommen et al., 2016, p. 224). However, the lack of research on education for these non-athlete actors shows that research on education on integrity is necessary.

## Methodological Justification

The previous chapter corresponds to the groundwork of this study. In this chapter, I elaborate on the motivations for the research strategy and use of methods. I proceed by describing the data analysis. Above that, I reflect on the validity and reliability of the research and on my role as a researcher. Last, the ethical considerations are explained.

### Research Design

This research answers the main question through an interpretative-qualitative research methodology. An interpretative-qualitative research design is suitable as this study examines how people interpret anti-social behaviour and perceive the educational programs focused on anti-social behaviour. The contribution of education to the safe sports climate is hard to define in numbers and can better be explained through the experiences of participants and educational trainers. Above that, this study takes an ethnographic approach, which provides a “detailed understanding of how the work gets done” (Yanow, 2012, p. 35). By focussing on description, context, and process, I translate experiences, meaning, and interpretations of participants into academic findings (Bryman, 2016). This is essential as this study aims to get a realistic image of how education and information about anti-social behaviour is provided and how it contributes to addressing integrity issues in sports.

This research has a flexible and adaptive approach. This means that the stages of collecting and analysing data, developing and modifying theory, and formulating research questions all iteratively take place. The research is inductive in nature as it starts with a question from NOC\*NSF, then data is collected to learn about the phenomena of a safe sports climate and about the educational programs and training. Throughout the research, I focused on interesting points that occur, which I then further explored.

### Research Methods

In this qualitative research, I used online ethnographic research methods, including participant observations, semi-structured interviews, examining websites, social media, news articles and yearly reports, and completed e-learnings on sports integrity. The online environment of this ethnographic research plays an important role as it challenges the senses of the ethnographer. Luckily, through the use of MS Teams and Zoom, I was still able to gather in-depth data.

### Participant Observations

Participant observation is described as a way of taking part in daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people, along with observing the surroundings and making notes of the occurring events (Musante & DeWalt, 2010). To gain a better understanding of how educational programs contribute to a safe sports climate, it is necessary to see what topics are discussed, what methods are used, and what people learn. The educational programs that I attended all took place online due to COVID-19. Above that, NOC\*NSF explained that due to COVID-19, less trainings than usual were given. Therefore I could not attend more educational programs than what was available in this exceptional context of the pandemic. In total, I observed five educational trainings, four on the topic of anti-social behaviour and one on the subject of doping. My findings are, however, focused on the first four trainings. Table 3. shows what educational programs on anti-social behaviour I attended.

Name of Program	Target Group	Date
<b>Social Safety</b>	Board Members	10 <sup>th</sup> of May
<b>Confidential Contact</b>	Confidential Contact Person	16 <sup>th</sup> of June
<b>Person within the Sports Club</b>		23 <sup>rd</sup> of June
<b>Recognising and Acknowledging anti-social behaviour</b>	Coaches	19 <sup>th</sup> of June

Table 3. participant observations

During the participant observations I used a topic list<sup>23</sup> that helped me focus on essential aspects of the research, which in turn helped me answer the sub- and main question. Furthermore, I have done the e-learnings available on the website of NOC\*NSF. These e-learnings are provided by NOC\*NSF in order to educate all sports actors about the occurrence of integrity violations and how to handle them. The e-learnings are free of charge and available for everyone. Before the educational training, participants are asked to complete an e-learning. Therefore, I completed the e-learning in advance of participating in an educational training. Above that, I finished the other e-learnings as the e-learnings provide feasible information about how NOC\*NSF translates the problem of anti-social behaviour into preventive measures.

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<sup>23</sup> Attachment 1

### Semi-Structured Interviews

I conducted 19 semi-structured interviews with four employees of NOC\*NSF, five educational trainers, and ten participants of educational programs. Interviews construct a reciprocal relationship as the interviewer gains knowledge about the participants, while the participants can share their experiences and present their perspectives (Boeije, 2009). I made use of pre-set interview questions<sup>24</sup>. However, when I wanted to investigate interesting answers, I deviated from the topic list to ask questions that I had not drafted in advance. In the first three weeks of the research, I interviewed the employees of NOC\*NSF, including employees of CVSN as part of NOC\*NSF, and educational trainers. These interviews focused on how they perceive the sports climate, what they think anti-social behaviour entails, and what they believe is the best way to educate people on anti-social behaviour. After those interviews, I conducted my participant observations. Then the second round of interviewing started with participants of educational programs. Participants of the educational programs are non-athlete actors, including board members, supervisors or trainers/coaches, and confidential contact persons. I mainly focused on how they found out about the educational program and how they perceived the educational training. This way, I could make an interpretation of how educational trainings contribute to a safe sports climate. The combination of interviewing and participant observation was beneficial as participants and I could refer back to the educational programs we both attended. This way, I got a better sense of what people meant when speaking of the specifics of what happened during the training. Moreover, by interviewing educational trainers and afterwards participate and observe their educational training, I could explore if the objectives of the educational trainers were achieved.

### Document Analysis

For this research, document analysis, consisting of examining websites and social media, was a beneficial method of gathering data about the messages that NOC\*NSF conveys about safe sports and how to prevent anti-social behaviour from happening. NOC\*NSF, and CVSN as part of NOC\*NSF, make use of social media to convey their message about safe sports. Yet, I found that their social media campaign has a small reach as CVSN only has 488 likes on Facebook<sup>25</sup> and 128 followers on Instagram<sup>26</sup>. This corresponds to 0.00011% of all the members of sports clubs in the Netherlands. Above that, I examined yearly reports and news

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<sup>24</sup> Attachment 2 and 3

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/>

articles which could tell me more about the context of sports, including the reports made on integrity violations, types of integrity violations, and the severity of integrity violations.

### Data analysis

The interviews, except for one, were conducted online through MS Teams. This program was suitable due to the COVID-19 measures and because the program made it possible to record the interviews. From the recordings, I transcribed the interviews. Besides recording, I also made notes during the interviews and participant observations. These notes focused on interesting points which can not be traced back to on the audio recording, such as body language or atmosphere. The transcripts have been coded with the use of the online coding program Nvivo. Coding refers to the categorisation of the collected data into concepts that form the basis of the theory (Bryman, 2016). The coding process consisted of three phases, namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the open coding stage, I organised the data by creating broad themes and concepts. In the axial coding stage, I categorised these themes and concepts on the basis of relationships between the open codes. In the axial coding stage, I rearranged the data in order to further refine the data and move towards developing theory and meaning. I ended up with the following themes that eventually form the basis of this analysis: 1) defining anti-social behaviour as ambiguous and subjective, 2) antecedents of anti-social behaviour 3) responsibility of non-athlete actors, and 4) methods and tools used in educational programs. Data collection and analysis are alternating phases (Boeije, 2010), so after each round of analysis, a new round of data collection began to follow up on interesting points rising from the data analysis to find comparing material. The analysis originates from the intertwined process of thinking and doing. Doing refers to the reading, searching, interpreting, writing, and coding in order for the findings to arise from the data. Thinking concerns the process categorising data, developing codes, and discovering links. (Boeije, 2010). Throughout the research, I have been rearranging codes in order to find new and interesting categories and themes. An example of this is the theme of responsibility which is a dominant topic within this study. At the beginning of the research, I had not focused on this theme in detail, but throughout the analysis, I was able to focus on this theme in relation to the main question.

## Quality of the Research

The quality of research concerns the validity and reliability of research. The quality of research is defined by ontological and epistemological ideas (Boeije, 2010). In this study, I take a social constructionist stance, meaning that what people perceive as reality is based on shared assumptions. People thus have a say in the construction of their social reality. Validity and reliability are criteria that are often used in quantitative research but can also be adjusted to the specific nature of qualitative research. Defining the quality of the research through validity and reliability might bring some challenges, but they are still worthy criteria measurements.

### Reliability

Reliability relates to whether the research is repeatable and traceable. The assumption is that with reliable methods, repeated observation will lead to the same outcomes, given that the phenomenon has not changed over time. From the social constructionist stance, society can change. Therefore reliability is challenged as opinions and behaviour might change as well. Yet, to guarantee the reliability, a standardisation of data collection methods is used. All interviews are conducted with the use of the same topic list and all participants' observations are done with the same topic list. Above that, every interview is coded in the same manner. This way, the expectation is that if this research is repeated, without a change in the social reality, it will provide the same results.

### Internal Validity

Internal validity corresponds to the quality of the research design, thus 'are you measuring what you want to measure?' Valid research provides a representative image of the reality. In order to increase the internal validity, I make use of triangulation. This means combining a variety of methods and collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings (Maxwell, 2008). The variety of methods consist of interviewing, participant observations, and document analysis. This research gives a representative image of the reality as it focuses on all the trainings offered by NOC\*NSF. Above that, it includes a broad range of participants. The combination of various qualitative research methods and diverse groups of individuals will provide me with what Maxwell (2008) calls 'rich data'.

### External Validity

External validity, also described as generalisability, refers to whether the results can be generalised beyond the specific research context (Boeije, 2010). This is one of the biggest challenges for qualitative research. Yet, by having interviewed multiple and different

participants of educational programs, education trainers, and employees of NOC\*NSF, the findings from this data can be generalised for all educational programs for non-athlete actors. The results might be generalisable for other integrity courses aimed at facilitators in different contexts. Moreover, the results lay at the basis of exploring the possibilities for implementing an integrated approach for education on integrity.

### Reflexive Discussion and Ethics

The researcher's involvement influences the field. For example, people might act differently when they feel they are being studied. As anti-social behaviour in sports is a sensitive topic, I decided to always let my role as a researcher know. Before I attended an educational training, I would send an email concerning my presence and the goal of the research and ask consent of participants. Above that, I introduced myself before every meeting so people could ask questions about the study and object to my presence. All of the participants agreed with my presence and did not seem to have any trouble with my company. One of my participants even complimented me on my approach. At the start of the interviews, I asked for informed consent. With that, I mentioned that participation in this research was voluntary, and I asked consent for the recordings of the interviews. I informed people that the recordings would be deleted when the study has been finished.

I expected that people might feel uncomfortable when talking about anti-social behaviour. Therefore I did not directly ask people whether they have ever experienced anti-social behaviour. My main focus was to gather data about the educational programs. Throughout the conversation, people would often tell me more about how they perceived the safety within their sports clubs and if they had ever experienced anti-social behaviour. Before I started my research, I also told the participants I was a professional athlete myself. This created a mutual interest, contributing to a sense of safety and trust. I made participants feel comfortable by also letting them ask me questions if they wanted to. This way, I created an equal relationship between researcher and participant.

I am also a part of my research population as I am a professional athlete and coach of a team. In the last few months, this study has been a big part of my life, and even if I was not directly working on the thesis, this study was always in my mind. For example, I became more sensitive to anti-social behaviour happening in my own sports team. Maybe by coincidence, but perhaps not, the topic of anti-social behaviour has been frequently discussed in my sports team. On the one hand, this research has made it easier for me to react to anti-social behaviour, but on the

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other hand, I also recognised my own ideas and thoughts about addressing anti-social behaviour in the experiences of the participants of this research. To overcome any bias, I took notes of my experiences, ideas, opinions, and feelings. By systematically keeping track of my own perspective, I was able to reflect on my role and influence in the field.

## Results

In this chapter, I explain how the educational programs of NOC\*NSF contribute, to a limited extent, to a safe sports climate by raising awareness to create a sense of responsibility for safe sports in non-athlete actors and by providing them with tools and measures to address anti-social behaviour. Employees of CVSN and educational trainers enunciate that the goal of NOC\*NSF is to create awareness on integrity issues. Yet, I contest this idea and state that raising awareness is the means by which the goal of creating a sense of responsibility in non-athlete actors is reached. Consequently, a sense of responsibility should then activate non-athlete to take preventive and reactive measures against anti-social behaviour. I argue, however, that NOC\*NSF is insufficient in providing participants with skills and tools to address anti-social behaviour. Above that, the positive approach used in the educational programs is detrimental to the effect that educational programs can have on preventing anti-social behaviour. Consequently, the educational programs only contribute to a safe sports climate to a limited extent as values, social norms, and cultural beliefs that make up the ethical environment of the sports context are not addressed.

### Defining Anti-Social Behaviour as Ambiguous and Subjective

In this first part, I show how NOC\*NSF contributes to a safe sports climate by teaching about the definition of anti-social behaviour and the categories it entails. By raising awareness on anti-social behaviour, participants get an understanding of what anti-social behaviour is and will be able to recognise anti-social behaviour. I, however, state that the way in which NOC\*NSF defines anti-social behaviour as ambiguous and subjective reduces the understanding of anti-social behaviour in both educational trainers and participants. This, in turn, makes it challenging to recognise anti-social behaviour and therefore participants are left unsatisfied with the definition of anti-social behaviour.

Awareness is an important element within the concept of integrity in sport (van der Steeg et al., 2020). It includes informing, highlighting, or drawing attention to a specific issue and inspiring others to act in a desired way (Kemshall & Moulden, 2017, p. 126). According to employees of CVNS and educational trainers, raising awareness is the primary goal of NOC\*NSF. Employee of CVSN (#1) stresses this constantly: “*It's really about, and this is what we are doing every day, the function of the umbrella organisation, as an advisory organisation, awareness, awareness, awareness*”, emphasising that they are obliged to do this by their statutes. The goal of the management of CVSN to create awareness -as it appears in the

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organisation's statutes- is also complied by educational trainers. Educational trainer (#2) states: "*Education and awareness, I really believe in that.*" However, I contest the idea that raising awareness is the objective of NOC\*NSF and state that raising awareness is rather a tool to create responsibility in non-athlete actors. Yet, defining anti-social behaviour as ambiguous and subjective complicates recognising anti-social behaviour and therefore has a detrimental impact on its goal of creating a sense of responsibility.

I start by explaining how NOC&NSF defines anti-social behaviour and illustrate how the definition of and the approach to anti-social behaviour is troublesome. NOC\*NSF provides trainings on, in Dutch, *grensoverschrijdend gedrag*, which in English is translated to transgressive behaviour. In their educational sessions, NOC\*NSF defines transgressive behaviour as:

*"Any form of behaviour or rapprochement, in a verbal, non-verbal or physical sense, which is experienced by the person undergoing it as forced and/or unwanted, has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the person, and takes place in the context of sport".*

Note that transgressive behaviour is not the same as anti-social behaviour. This is because NOC\*NSF makes a distinction between soft and hard transgressive behaviour. Hard transgressive behaviour is divided into the categories of match fixing, doping, and integrity (theft, fraud bribery). Soft transgressive behaviour includes sexual intimidation or abuse, discrimination, bullying and exclusion, aggression and violence, and intimidation. Soft transgressive behaviour as defined by NOC\*NSF corresponds to what is described in the literature as anti-social behaviour: "acts that are harmful or put others at a disadvantage" (Benson & Bruner, 2017. p. 120). The dignity of the person, in the definition of NOC\*NSF, corresponds to the harm or disadvantage towards a person.

Anti-social behaviour is often linked to sexual intimidation, yet NOC\*NSF wants people to learn about all types of anti-social behaviour. Educational trainer (#2) explains:

*"We want people to know that anti-social behaviour is not just sexual assault and rape. Then we don't have a discussion, because we know. But there is a big grey area in which all things can happen. That does not only need to be sexual transgressive behaviour. It can also be discrimination, aggression, bullying, violence."*

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The rationale is that people often link anti-social behaviour to sexual intimidation but do not know that other categories, namely discrimination, bullying and exclusion, aggression and violence, and intimidation, can also be described as anti-social behaviour. In the interviews, participants confirm this idea. For example, participant (#7), a confidential contact person, tells me:

*"Then what also struck me was that anti-social behaviour, which was mentioned, actually happens way quicker than I thought. A little bullying, for example, which can indeed happen quite simply and easily, can have enormous consequences for someone. If someone is a bit overweight and children bully each other, that happens quite often. And it is not always pleasant. All sorts of programmes are devised for that as well. But when a trainer or coach does that, it's even more intimidating. Actually much more intimidating than we think it is."*

This quote illustrates that before attending an educational training, people are unaware of what types of behaviour can be defined as anti-social behaviour and shows that the educational trainings provide a better understanding of the different categories within anti-social behaviour. Through the training, participants learn that small acts can have major influences on someone and that power relations play a big part in this. Above that, participants indicate that they had experienced certain types of anti-social behaviour in their own sports club, but before the training would not have distinguished it as anti-social behaviour. For example, participant (#9), a confidential contact person, states: *"I had no idea what you might encounter. So I found it very informative to recognise that. Then I thought, oh yes, that has happened at our club too."* This illustrates that people learn about the categories of anti-social behaviour. However, findings also show that the contribution to the understanding of anti-social behaviour is limited as anti-social behaviour is defined as ambiguous and subjective, making it harder for people to recognise anti-social behaviour, which is detrimental to the contribution of a safe sports climate.

The definition and the approach taken to describe anti-social behaviour in the educational programs of NOC&NSF is problematic for three reasons. First, the distinction between the different types of transgressive behaviour that NOC\*NSF makes is not consistent across its various communication channels (website, document, trainings' slides). Second, the differentiation between 'hard' and 'soft' transgressive behaviour, based on laws and rules, is not correct. Third, the definition of transgressive behaviour provided by NOC\*NSF is incomplete in the sense that it fails to address how and by whom such behaviour can be

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recognised. These three issues create confusion for participants and are disadvantageous in creating awareness. I will elaborate more on them in the following paragraphs.

Educational trainers view anti-social behaviour as an ambiguous concept, which creates confusion. The first cause for confusion relates to the different categories that NOC\*NSF distinguishes in their educational programs and on their website. I first experienced this ambiguity when I did my exploratory research on the website of Centrum Veilige Sport Nederland<sup>27</sup>. On their website, the following topics can be found: bullying, sexual intimidation and abuse, social safety in corona, match fixing, doping, e-learning integrity, and e-learning discrimination. These categories correspond with the division between soft and hard transgressive behaviour. However, when you click on ‘integrity’, you get a page in which you can be referred to different e-larnings on match fixing, doping, discrimination, financial integrity, code good sports administration, sexual intimidation, and bullying. This would mean that these topics fall into the category of integrity. Yet, in the trainings, integrity is described as a sub-category of hard transgressive behaviour. This shows that NOC\*NSF is itself inconsistent in using the categorisations of integrity throughout different communication channels.

Furthermore, participants mentioned that they would like to spend some more time on these topics. For example, participant (#4), a confidential contact person, elaborates: “*I did notice that yes, an explanation is required. I thought we went through it quite quickly. We also stopped half an hour earlier the first session. I actually think we would have needed that half an hour.*” This illustrates that participants feel like the trainer rushed through the information and that instead, they would have preferred to spend more time on this topic to better understand the information. Another participant (#9) comments on the educational trainer: “*I just found her awkward, but maybe she was uncomfortable doing it.*” This rather clumsy approach, as described by participant (#9), could be caused by the uncertainty of the educational trainer on what the different topics of integrity entail. Contrary to this idea, the online environment can also cause the uncomfortable appearance of the educational trainer. Still, the findings point to an ambiguity in the use of concepts and reveal that CVSN itself struggles with the ambiguous concept of anti-social behaviour becoming visible in their educational programs.

The second problem relates to the distinction between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ transgressive behaviour that educational trainers make based on rules and laws. Their idea is that match fixing and doping are ‘objective’ issues, defined by the law, and that anti-social behaviour is instead a

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<sup>27</sup> <https://centrumveiligesport.nl/>

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‘subjective’ issue, determined by personal opinions. Indeed, in the webinar on safe sports, educational trainer (#1) describes that doping and match fixing can be considered as straightforward. They consist of clear rules and therefore can be easily detected and sanctioned. She explains that anti-social behaviour, on the other hand, is more “vague, personal and has blurry boundaries”. Another employee of CVSN (#1) summarises this prevailing idea during an interview:

*“In doping you have ‘if you have done this, you get a two year sentence. If you have done that, you get a three year sentence.’ That is often really black and white. When you get tested and you have peed and the pee is not good and you used that substance, you get a particular sentence. And that way you can easily do it. But for match fixing there are way more factors that play a role. And for sexual transgressive behaviour that is even more the case so.”*

This quote suggests that people believe that for doping, but also for match fixing, rules and laws decide whether a particular action is wrong and thus sanctionable. This idea corresponds to the more legal view of integrity, based on the clarity of rules and laws (Huberts, 2018). Compared to this rather objectifiable approach to doping and match fixing, anti-social behaviour is regarded and taught as much more subjective by employees of CVSN and educational trainers. In fact, educational trainers and employees of CVSN behold the idea that anti-social behaviour is not defined by clear rules and laws, and therefore not objective. Anti-social behaviour is then determined by individual perceptions of integrity. This is problematic as personal values are limited in assessing behaviour (Huberts, 2018). Even more so, the idea of subjectivity is false. All categories of anti-social behaviour are sanctionable by law<sup>28</sup>. Article 1 of the Constitution states that discrimination is prohibited<sup>29</sup>. Bullying in itself is not punishable, yet certain types of bullying are punishable when a particular boundary is exceeded, violence being one of them<sup>30</sup>. Intimidation is also a criminal offence<sup>31</sup>. On top of the legislation, sports federations, NOC\*NSF, the Ministry of Health, Science and Sport, and experts have drafted codes of conduct for boards, trainers and coaches, referees, judges and officials, and (professional) athletes<sup>32</sup>. These codes of conduct are based on rules on integrity and norms and involve commitments. Hence, I contest the idea that anti-social behaviour is subjective as anti-social

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/seksuele-misdrijven/wetsvoorstel-seksuele-misdrijven>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/discriminatie/verbod-op-discriminatie>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.onderwijsconsument.nl/is-pesten-strafbaar/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www arbeidsrechter.nl/bedreiging-intimidatie-beledigen-werknemer-ontslag-staande-voet/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://centrumveiligesport.nl/de-gedragscodes-sport-ook-voor-jou>

behaviour can often be clearly defined by regulations and laws. Nevertheless, as shown above, educational trainings put great emphasis on the ‘subjectivity’ of anti-social behaviour and the absence of clear rules, laws, and sanctions addressing it.

Still, some forms of behaviour are not sanctionable by law but can be defined as anti-social behaviour as it harms or disadvantages someone or violates their dignity. This corresponds to the idea of Huberts (2018, p. 21) that “the judicial framework is not always applicable to the behaviour being judged”. Throughout this research, behaviour that is not included in the judicial framework is often referred to as falling into the “grey area”. Educational trainer (#2) explains how she sees the grey area: *“If it does not feel good, then it is not okay. And this is what I call the grey area. And where you think ‘is this anti-social?’ Yes, it is. It crosses your boundary as soon as it does not feel good.”* I want to elaborate on this quote with an example that I heard from multiple educational trainers of someone putting a hand on your shoulder. You might be totally fine with this when someone does this, but when another person does the exact same thing, you might not feel okay. These differences in experience can be caused, for example, by gender differences, power relations, or an age gap. Another example can be that you might feel fine with someone giving you a kiss on the cheek while someone of the same age, status, or gender as you might not feel fine with this when the exact same person gives them a kiss on the cheek. What I try to emphasise here is that one act can be experienced differently by various people. In this regard, anti-social behaviour can be seen as subjective but only to the extent that the ‘receiver’ of a certain behaviour feels harmed, disadvantaged, or feels that his/her dignity is violated, in the quote of educational trainer (#2) described as “behaviour that crosses your boundary”.

This stance, however, brings me to the third problem of the definition of anti-social behaviour. Behaviour is defined as anti-social by the ‘receiver’ of behaviour, thus when someone feels harmed, disadvantaged, or feels that his/her dignity is violated. This view corresponds to what is written in the literature but is troublesome because it rests on the individual perceptions of integrity and personal values (Huberts, 2010). Defining anti-social behaviour as such would mean that if someone does not feel harmed, violated, or disadvantaged, then, according to the definition of NOC\*NSF and the definition of Benson and Bruner (2017), behaviour can not be regarded as anti-social. A question about this was asked by a participant on the webinar on safe sports: *“what if the people involved in certain behaviour don’t think it is anti-social behaviour, but bystanders do believe it is anti-social behaviour?”* This participant is referring to behaviour that is not perceived as harmful by the people involved and is also not included within the

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judicial framework but is still regarded as anti-social behaviour by others. An example that we came across upon in the webinar is a sexual relationship between a male coach above the age of 18 and a girl above the age of 16. This is not prohibited by law, and if both of them want it, it can not be regarded as anti-social behaviour according to the definition of NOC\*NSF and Benson and Bruner (2017). Still, this relationship might be considered as anti-social behaviour or harmful by others. The educational trainer, however, did not answer the question of this participant but instead asked the participant what he thought himself. Unfortunately, the participant did not answer this question as well, which left me feeling unsatisfied with both the definition of anti-social behaviour and the way it was handled in the webinar. This confirms, building on the arguments presented above, that both participants and educational trainers are struggling with the ambiguous definition of anti-social behaviour. Educational trainer (#2) agrees on this in the interview: *Anti-social behaviour to someone, does not have to be anti-social behaviour to another. That's what makes it difficult.*" This quote reveals the underlying problem that seeing anti-social behaviour as subjective is problematic for recognising the issue of anti-social behaviour as it lacks a shared definition.

These findings illustrate that defining anti-social behaviour as ambiguous and subjective makes it difficult to recognise anti-social behaviour. Both educational trainers and participants are struggling with the definition of anti-social behaviour, who decides when it is anti-social behaviour, and when to acknowledge behaviour as anti-social. Much rather than viewing anti-social behaviour as subjective, anti-social behaviour can be better be linked to the concept of morality or a "general way of acting morally" (Huberts, 2018, p. 20). The perspective of morality is broader than the individual perception of integrity and personal values and ascends the legal view of integrity and is therefore more applicable to the definition of anti-social behaviour. Yet, the morality in the sports contexts is different from other, educational, contexts. Consequently, the ethical environment makes it challenging to recognise anti-social behaviour as it is often not regarded as inappropriate behaviour within the specific sports context.

## The Ethical Environment and the Emphasis on Responsibility

In the previous section, I elaborated on the issues relating to the definition of NOC\*NSF on anti-social behaviour as ambiguous and subjective. Additionally, the ethical environment also plays a significant role in the lack of recognition of the issue of anti-social behaviour. The ethical environment determines the thoughts about what is appropriate to a particular role, what is expected of someone, and the ideas about obligations and rights (Haydon, 2004). In order to

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reduce anti-social behaviour, the antecedents of anti-social behaviour must be addressed, which will in turn change the ethical environment. In this second section I show that employees of CVSN and educational trainers know that the ethical environment of the sports context is problematic, yet, in their educational trainings the ethical environment is not addressed. Rather, NOC\*NSF focuses on creating a sense of responsibility in non-athlete actors by informing them about their roles and obligations. The educational trainers make use of a positive approach towards a safe sports climate instead of focussing on the negative causes of anti-social behaviour. By providing superficial information, the educational programs make a modest contribution to the provision of safe sports climate.

Integrity violations within the sports contexts reflect on the ethical environment, which is characterised by high competitiveness. In fact, anti-social behaviour has been proven to be more acceptable in the sports context than in other contexts (Shrout et al., 2017). Employee of CVSN (#3) emphasises the extent to which anti-social behaviour seems to occur more often in professional sports contexts. He explains that this is due to the fact that “*professional athletes want to go to the Olympic Games and have a trainer which they think ‘yeah I need to deal with it. And then I just let it happen because of my goal’.*” This quote shows that professional athletes face safety threats, but they do not regard this as a sufficient reason to jeopardise their sports careers. Rather, professional athletes take anti-social behaviour, often exhibited by their coaches, for granted in order to reach a higher goal. This way of thinking corresponds with the outcomes of the study of Kavussanu (2019), who states that anti-social behaviour is more common in a performance motivational climate. Coaches aim to make their athletes perform better. The context of sports environments often offers possibilities for athlete abuse and exploitation (McMahon et al., 2018), which can either be physical abuse, mental abuse, or sexual abuse. Educational trainer (#2) provides an example of mental abuse: “*There are still methods where people, coaches, think, unbelievable, that you first have to break people mentally before you can build them up. Because then they will get tough*”. Experiences of physical abuse are also mentioned in the interviews I conducted. For example, participant (#2), a coach, illustrates how she saw physical abuse happening in her former sports club:

*“There was a girl who had ruptured her cruciate ligament. And they just did not believe her. So she was faking it. And she was forced to come to the training or otherwise she was not allowed to participate in qualifiers. But it was just too much pain so then she went to the doctor and then it turned out that her cruciate ligament was ruptured. And now she can never do gymnastics anymore.”*

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These quotes illustrate how emotional and physical abuse is seen as a component of sports, especially competitive sports. These athletes want to reach a goal, even at the expense of their mental and physical health. Their coaches are crossing boundaries, both mentally and physically, by using a controlling coaching style (Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011). Additionally, not only in professional sports contexts anti-social behaviour is more acceptable, but also in recreative sports employees of CVSN recognise anti-social behaviour. As competitive values are prioritised over ethical values, the competitive dimension of sports contexts is key in distinguishing it from other similar educational contexts, such as school contexts. For instance, employee of CVSN (#2) explains that there is a difference between what kind of behaviour is not accepted in an educational context but is accepted in a sports context:

*“If a gymnastics teacher on a preschool is shouting to children, like how a hockey trainer would do, then the teacher would have been fired. It is more normal in sport that coaches are shouting. ‘a trainer that lets children of 8-9 years run 10 rounds and let them push up 20 times for punishment is regarded as normal “it will make you stronger”. But when you let a teacher in a classroom do that, then you have the inspection on your doorstep. So apparently there is something happening in our head as athlete, trainer, volunteer, board member that we label this kind of behaviour in sport as positively developing. Meanwhile, if this behaviour happens two hours before that on school then it is a toxic environment.”*

Thus, as soon as the context changes, certain types of behaviour that are regarded as anti-social in educational contexts are accepted in the sports context. Other contexts where these types of behaviour occur are even described as toxic environments. The fact that anti-social behaviour is tolerated in the sports context is supported by Kavussanu and Ring (2015), who found that anti-social behaviour is more acceptable in sports than in university. These findings highlight that anti-social behaviour is accepted not only by coaches but also by other actors, such as parents, board members, and athletes themselves. Above that, employees of CVSN know that the competitive sports context is a fertile ground for anti-social behaviour. Yet, the antecedents, especially the competitive atmosphere of the sports context, of anti-social behaviour are not discussed in the educational programs. Educational programs focus the definition of anti-social behaviour, as described in the first section, and then continue to discuss the duties of board members and elaborate on preventive and reactive measures that can be taken against anti-social behaviour. However, when non-athlete actors do not know what causes anti-social behaviour they also do not know how to address the antecedents of anti-social behaviour. Instead of

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educating on the causes of anti-social behaviour, NOC\*NSF focuses on contributing to a safe sports climate by addressing the responsibility of board members by informing them about their duties and obligations.

The fact that NOC\*NSF addresses board members is not wrong perse as “leaders can shape the norms and values of an organisation and can therefore create ethical norms that are able to guide the moral or immoral behaviour of the individuals or groups of individuals (Burton et al., 2017. p. 230). This means that board members, as leaders of sports clubs, can change the ethical environment and therefore are able to reduce anti-social behaviour. For leaders to change the ethical environment, they need to be driven by altruistic calling and need to be aware of the surroundings, corresponding to the ideas of a servant leadership approach (Burton et al., 2017). However, board members in sports organisations can not be defined as servant leaders as they do not recognise the cues from the environment, and therefore, they do not anticipate on consequences of anti-social behaviour. This is problematic as NOC\*NSF holds board members responsible for the safety of their sports climate. Multiple employees of CVSN illustrate this problem:

*“What we also see is that a board member of a club, when there is an incident, that he is completely surprised. ‘Here? Nothing ever happens here. Nobody ever spoke to me about this being a problem. All my doors are open. Everyone can come to me’.”* (Employee of CVSN #2)

This quote shows that board members do not take responsibility for maintaining a safe sports climate because they do not recognise anti-social behaviour as an issue. As a result of this, board members often lack the motivation to take preventive measures. The lack of motivation and perceived time is explained by Employee of CVSN (#1):

*“Board members say: we don’t need prevention measurements, I know our members, this does not happen here’.. For board members it’s like ‘yeah we don’t feel like it... and we don’t want to put in that much trouble’. And you know they are volunteers so they just want to show off with their status. They don’t want to do extra things on their free evening.”*

The lack of motivation is related to the fact that it takes up some time to install preventative measures. The attendance on the webinar on social safety at the sports club demonstrates this once more. There were only six participants that belong to five different sports clubs. Their functions ranged from board member, to coach, to confidant. The non-board members were

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sent to the webinar as delegates of the board. Moreover, this quote, again, proves the absence of recognition of the problem by board members. Consequently, when an integrity violation occurs, board members are surprised because they thought they had always done enough to ensure that their sports club is safe. This is then linked to the third reason why board members don't take responsibility for creating a safe sports climate, namely, they do not know how to do this. Employee of CVSN #3 states:

*"Board members don't want anything to do with it. They don't know what they need to do and only when things get more clear or when a notification gets made then they will take action and say ooh what can we actually do?"*

This last quote proofs that board members only take action after an incident has happened. They do not prevent anti-social behaviour from happening because they do not recognise the existence of the issues and therefore lack the motivation to take preventive measures, and when these issues do arise, they admit not having the tools or knowledge to address them and thereby are not able to improve the safety of sports climate within their sports club. The issue of the lack of responsibility can be explained as moral disengagement, as board members are not involved in addressing anti-social behaviour. Moral disengagement reduces guilt and other negative emotions that suppress anti-social behaviour (Moore et al., 2018). Although employees of CVSN know that board members fail to address the issue of anti-social behaviour because they are unaware of the surroundings and are not internally motivated, they fail to address this issue in their educational programs. The antecedents of anti-social behaviour are not discussed. Above that, in order to improve morality and teach about norms, or "the correct thing to do" (Huberts, 2018, p. 23), people need to understand what the wrong thing to do is. This means addressing the negative aspects of anti-social behaviour. However, the negative side is often not touched upon in the educational programs, it is regarded as a sensitive topic that is preferably avoided and instead the focus lies on the positive future. The positive future referring to a "utopia" (educational trainer #1) where there will be no cases of anti-social behaviour and the taboo on discussing anti-social behaviour is elevated.

I illustrate that the sensitivity of the issue of anti-social behaviour is not discussed in the educational programs with a vignette of a participant observation in a webinar on safe sports:

*The webinar on social safety has just started. All ten attendants are visible on screen through the small boxes that are depicted in the zoom meeting. Everyone introduces him/herself shortly. Then a video starts that shows three cases of anti-*

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*social behaviour. The educational trainer asks if we have ever experienced anti-social behaviour in our own sports clubs. Silence. Nobody raises his hand. Then, I raise my virtual hand and tell everyone that in my sports club I have seen a relationship that was, in my eyes, unethical. Then another man, around 50 years old, headphones on, sitting in his office chair, raises his virtual hand. He says that he has experienced anti-social behaviour in his sports club but does not tell what has happened. The educational trainer asks him: "is it still too fresh and sensitive?" The man answers insecurely: "yes.". "Okay, that is fine," replies the educational trainer. Then she passes the turn to another woman.<sup>33</sup>*

The fact that people in the first place did not raise their hands proves that people are reticent in telling about experiences with anti-social behaviour. Above that, it shows that as soon as someone does share their thoughts, others will follow. This indicates that people find anti-social behaviour a sensitive topic. Even more importantly, it illustrates how the sensitivity of anti-social behaviour is not addressed in the educational training. Yet, this particular educational trainer (#1) explains to me in an interview: "*I think you have to have that conversation with each other. Why is it sensitive? Why is interacting with each other, agreeing on what you do and do not want, why is that sensitive?*" She claims that people need to talk about the sensitivity, as that this is a measure that can prevent anti-social behaviour from happening at a sports club. However, when the sensitivity of the subject comes up in her educational training, she does not address the issue. Rather, she continues by passing the turn to others. Moreover, employee of CVSN (#3) was also present in this webinar and found this moment was surprising. In the interview afterwards he tells me:

*"It evoked something in me. I don't know what it evokes, but that is just me thinking that this man has become very involved because of it and he just doesn't want to share it and wants to put it behind him or he just doesn't feel safe. But those are more my internal thoughts."*

This quote shows that he too noticed the sensitivity, but instead of addressing this sensitivity, he also did not speak up. After some people told their experiences with anti-social behaviour in their sports club, the webinar continued with a definition of anti-social behaviour and some facts and figures that arose from a prevalence study. Next, the measures that board members

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<sup>33</sup> Participant Observations, Webinar Sociale Veiligheid, 10-05-2021

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can take and the rules they have to follow were explained. The sensitivity of the issue was not further discussed.

The fact that people rather not deal with sensitive issues and negative behaviour that may occur in their sports club is also demonstrated by employee of CVSН (#2), who explains: “*if, for example, we provide a webinar on ‘sexual harassment in your sports club’, nobody attends. Just zero registrations. And then if I say ‘social safety, how can we do it better?’ Then I get 80 registrations.*” This illustrates that people do not want to talk about the negative part and are more interested in positivity. Even when a webinar makes use of a ‘positive’ title, people still think the seminar will be about very sensitive topics. For example, participant (#7) states, after attending the webinar on safe sports: “*Perhaps I had expected it to be heavier. Look, it is, of course, a very loaded subject*”, which shows that even though the webinar is called ‘safe sports’, a positive term, people still expect it to be about though topics. Above that, participant (#7) states that he was positively surprised that it was still quite light-hearted as anti-social behaviour was not really discussed but rather the focus lied on preventive measures. Moreover, not only participants and educational trainers prefer a positive approach, also the Nationaal Sportakkoord<sup>34</sup>, drafted by the main actors in the sports context, is written from a very positive point of view. The Nationaal Sportakkoord literally states: “*the basic philosophy of the present approach is based on positivity*” (p. 31). Yet, organisations only change their ethical conduct as part of their culture when they have been punished for actual or alleged ethical violations, when management strongly supports ethical conduct and promotes employees to ask questions about ethical conduct, and when a formal program to encourage whistleblowing has been set up (Benson & Ross, 1998). This means that the ethical environment will only change when people start questioning the morality in the sports context. However, as long as the antecedents of anti-social behaviour, and especially the competitive atmosphere, are not addressed in educational programs because of the sensitivity of the subject, then participants will also not learn what the correct way to act is.

These findings show that even though both employees of CVSН and educational trainers know that the ethical environment nourishes anti-social behaviour, this ethical environment is not addressed in the educational programs. The educational trainers and participants prefer not to talk about the sensitivity of the problem and instead keep the conversation light, yet this will not change the morality of sports actors and therefore the ethical environment will remain to

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.sportakkoord.nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/12/Nationaal-Sportakkoord.pdf>

accept anti-social behaviour. The causes of anti-social behaviour are not addressed, and after explaining what anti-social behaviour entails, educational trainers immediately turn to explaining the preventive and reactive measures.

### Lack of Profundity in the Tools and Measures

By focussing on a positive future instead of discussing the antecedents of anti-social behaviour and therefore change the morality of sports actors, NOC\*NSF fails to provide participants with in-depth knowledge about how to change the ethical environment. Rather, NOC\*NSF informs participants about their obligations and provides them with some preventive measures and reactive measures. These measures contribute to a safe sports climate as they ensure that no offenders can occupy a position in the sports club and encourage them to take action as soon as people have experienced anti-social behaviour. However, there is a lack of discussion about how to establish social norms and NOC\*NSF fails to provide more practical tools to prevent anti-social behaviour, causing the participants to feel unsatisfied after attending an educational training.

Educational trainers want to stimulate action, which will contribute to the positive future, the “utopia” (employee of CVSN #1 and educational trainer #1), in which anti-social behaviour is no longer existent. Educational trainer (#1) explains this objective:

*“what I want to achieve is that people start to think, and then afterwards also say ‘oh yes, I want to do something with this, or I don’t want to do that.’ But not just give information... because I don’t think that something is going to change in people’s minds.”*

The educational trainer does not want to provide plain information about anti-social behaviour because then people will be less likely to take action. Case-based discussions are indeed proven to engage students (Segal, 2013). A way in which dialogue is stimulated is through assignments. For example, in the training on recognising and acknowledging anti-social behaviour for coaches of a gymnastics sports club, the participants were taught about the different types of anti-social behaviour, namely physical, emotional, and sexual behaviour, by an assignment. Every participant had to write down two types of acts for each category. The answers were then discussed to create an image of what anti-social behaviour entails. Assignments stimulate discussions and ethical educational programs are most effective when they include groups discussions or real-life cases (Warnick & Silvermann, 2011). This is supported by the

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participants of all the educational programs I attended. Participant (#10), a manager of a sports club, elaborates on this in the interview:

*“From experience I know that you learn a lot more when you are involved in the process. At least, I think about it afterwards or tell my partner about what I experienced in contrast to when I receive a boring briefing... Some people have had some experience with anti-social behaviour and others didn’t. And everyone had a different perspective and through that I learned a lot”*

This quote substantiates the literature and the ideas of the educational trainer. People will learn a lot more when they participate in a conversation about the topic. Even more importantly, they will discuss the webinar with others which can cause a chain of reaction to change the ethical environment.

Besides getting taught about definitions, participants learn about the consequences of anti-social behaviour. The idea is that by showing the repercussions, participants will feel more responsible for tackling the issue of anti-social behaviour. The impact of anti-social behaviour is often illustrated through facts and figures where, for example, percentages of victims are given. Yet, participants do not feel the need to learn about those facts and figures. When I ask participant (#5) if she would like to change something in the educational training, she answers: *“Yes, look for the conversation and not the factual information. Because I don’t think that is very interesting. Especially if you have done the e-learning beforehand.”* This promotes the need for more discussion and depth and not facts and figures. Above that, she mentions the e-learning. The elearnings can be found online and are available to everyone. Participants are fond of the elearnings and believe that it provides them with clear information and skills and tools through practical assignments. Additionally, the fact that they can do the elearnings in their free time is a big advantage. Participants tell me that they would not mind doing more preparatory work if this means that they can then dive even deeper into the materials during the webinar. This also relates to a point of criticism for the educational trainings. There is quite some repetition between the elearnings and the educational trainings, which is unnecessary. Participant (#5) is right about the goal of the elearnings: *“but in my opinion, the e-learning and all those facts are meant to wake you up to gosh, it is there. It is really there. And in itself, that is fine. But I had the idea that we had already done this and now we’re doing it again.”* I agree that the elearnings are valuable tools in creating a sense of what anti-social behaviour entails. The videos, cases, and quizzes provide a clear image of what types of anti-social behaviour are existent in the sports context. Yet, the repetition of information is a waste of time

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and, more importantly, does not educate participants on how they can prevent anti-social behaviour from happening. Above that, participant (#8) states that she does not need to learn about the prevalence of anti-social behaviour:

*"The definitions, the numbers. Then I think: oh well. We understand the importance. So you don't have to use that information to show that this is an important subject. And there is too much, you shouldn't use those two hours for that, I think. Because those two hours, if you only have two hours, it is not that much. Then go and have a really good conversation about it.*

The analysis shows that participants in educational programs recognise the problem and feel responsible for creating a safe sports climate. Therefore they do not need to be educated about the consequences. Rather, participants would like to have a conversation and exchange knowledge with each other in order to learn how everyone tackles problems in their own sports club. Many participants state that they like the break-out rooms where they can talk to each other in smaller groups, and advice to make use of these methods even more. Participant (#4) states the prevailing opinion of participants that they are satisfied with the use of cases and discussions about experiences and sharing of knowledge: "*Just really good. It could have been done ever more. If there had been more time.*" He even recommends an extra few hours to share knowledge with each other, which is also viewed positively by others. However, the fact that people would like to participate in another session and keep in contact with each other also proves that they feel the need for more information and sharing of knowledge. Therefore, the educational programs do not provide complete satisfaction to participants. For example, participant (#5) states: "*I think it is about how you can talk to each other and how you to look for things that are difficult, and I actually missed that a bit.*" This quote and the fact that people would like to participate even more, shows the need for more conversation, knowledge exchange, and profundity.

Besides in-depth conversations and discussions, participants also like to receive more practical tools and measures. In the educational trainings multiple preventive measures are given, which can contribute to a safe sports climate. However, these measures do not tackle the high competitive context that is a major cause of anti-social behaviour. For example, one measure that board members can take is to make use of the high 5 roadmap<sup>35</sup>, which can be found on the website. The high 5 roadmap makes use of a positive approach, but one step does include a risk

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<sup>35</sup> <https://centrumveiligesport.nl/doelgroepen/bestuurders-en-begeleiders/stappenplan>

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assessment. Unfortunately, this is not further explained in the training. Another preventive measure that board members can take is the certificate of good conduct, which is a “statement from the Ministry of Safety and Justice, that shows that the person’s past conduct does not constitute an obstacle to the requested purpose, for example, obtaining a new job or working with minors at a sports club”.<sup>36</sup> A certificate of good conduct is what Hartman-Tews (2021) describes as a ‘formal norm’. Yet, this is not sufficient in preventing anti-social behaviour. For example, I have a certificate of good conduct, but I can still exhibit anti-social behaviour. I tell employee of CVS #1, who is also responsible for the information provision on the certificate of good conduct, that I believe it is hard to prevent anti-social behaviour such as bullying or discrimination with this certificate of conduct. He answers: “*I totally agree with you. Absolutely right. You can't prevent it with a certificate of conduct. That is really for the, unfortunately, more serious cases. Real incidents.*” This quote shows that more needs be done than simply get a certificate of conduct as it can only prove that someone has not broken any laws in the past. Above that, NOC\*NSF can not enforce that all sports clubs adopt a certificate of good conduct rule.

The certificate of good conduct is not enough to provide safety on the sports club. Therefore educational programs teach participants about what else they can do. Employee of CVS #2) explains what tools they provide:

*“And then you see that in the materials that we make or in the e-learnings that we make, it's about what can you do as prevention. And then we list those kinds of things again. You can apply for a certificate of good conduct, you can do reference checks, make sure you have a confidential contact person. Make sure that if something goes wrong, people know where to go. So you include a number of those bullet points in the education, so that it is a recurring story every time.”*

This quote shows that board members can take multiple measures that contribute to the safety of their athletes. Yet, as discussed before, the certificate of good conduct is not sufficient in preventing anti-social behaviour. Doing reference checks is similar to a certificate of good conduct and will therefore also not prevent anti-social behaviour. Appointing a confidential contact person contributes to a safer sports climate. Still, it tends more towards a reactive measure as this is a person where people can go when they have a question, which often only happens after someone has experienced anti-social behaviour. What is, however, important is

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<sup>36</sup> <https://nocnsf.nl/wat-doet-nocnsf/sport-en-maatschappij/verklaring-omtrent-gedrag-aanvragen>

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that board members place the topic of a safe sports climate on the agenda. Meaning that they elaborate on anti-social behaviour in the general meeting for members, disseminate information, for example, with posters or through the newsletter, and by emphasising the codes of conduct. This way, members learn about morality. As mentioned before, board members, unfortunately, lack time and motivation to give a lot of attention to the topic of anti-social behaviour. Information should therefore be easy to find. Participant (#7) explains how he would like to get the information:

*“Personally, I would say as CVSN ‘the people who have participated in this, or the club, they get a package with a poster and flyers and whatever’. That you immediately ensure visibility at the sports club. With a piece that can be filled in with, for example, the email address or telephone number of the confidential contact person. That way, CVSN is a bit more active. Instead of ‘here are your access codes and see for yourself what you can get from the website’.”*

This quote shows that participants, or board members, believe that NOC\*NSF is too passive with spreading their information. On the other hand, the employees of NOC\*NSF explain to me that they are putting in a lot of energy and time to convey a message. Apparently, there is a discrepancy in the way that NOC\*NSF provides information and how it is received by board members.

Besides providing preventive measures, reactive measures are also discussed in the educational programs. One of the most prominent reactive measures to receive attention is the duty to report any suspicion of sexual intimidation and abuse. Furthermore, the campaign ‘do you stay silent or do you talk about it?<sup>37</sup>’ is also reactive in nature, as it refers to the duty to report, an action that is taken after anti-social behaviour is exhibited. Participants learn reactive measures through role-play and assignments and perceive this as very useful. For example, participant (#9) mentions: “*it became clearer to me what my role entails and what actions I have to take.*”.

The reactive measures that are taught in the educational programs are realistic. Participant (#6) proudly tells me: “*exactly between the two meetings someone came to me with a problem. I had my introductory words ready right at the start, so I could use that. I could put it into practice immediately.*” This shows that people are able to use the information that they got, and that through stories people will better remember information (Segal, 2013). Yet, when I asked

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<sup>37</sup> Blijf je stil of praat je erover? <https://centrumveiligesport.nl/doelgroepen/bestuurders-en-begeleiders/campagne-blijf-je-stil-of-praat-je-erover>

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participants if they would recommend the educational programs, they were often doubtful. Most of them would recommend the trainings but with a side note. Participant (#1) explains:

*“Now it’s like ‘good luck with it’. And I found that quite difficult. If you really want to take it further and really want to set something up (as confidential contact person), I think it is better to call the number we were given every time and talk to them.”*

The number that she is talking about is the number of CVSN. This quote illustrates that participants get some basic knowledge, or plain information, on a safe sports climate, but if they want to take more preventive actions or need help in reacting to anti-social behaviour, they can better call CVSN as they can provide them with more information. This feeling of dissatisfaction also prevails with participant (#3), mainly because of the price-quality ratio: *“I think that 200 euros is quite a large amount of money for what you get in the end.”* He supports this argument by stating that he would have liked to have more practice in the training.

To conclude, these findings show that the educational programs contribute to a safe sports climate by providing some preventive and reactive measures and tools to address anti-social behaviour. Above that, participants view the cases and role-play as very useful and practical. However, they also feel that the educational programs lack some profundity as they would have liked to share more experiences and go into detail even more. In the following chapter, I provide a conclusion on the contribution of educational programs to a safe sports climate by answering the main question.

# Conclusion

In this chapter, I answer the main research question, namely, “**how do educational programs on anti-social behaviour contribute to a safe sports climate?**” This question has been split up into three sub-questions that focus on the definition of anti-social behaviour, the construction of educational programs, and the perceptions of participants on educational programs.

## Defining Anti-Social Behaviour

To first get an understanding of the issue of anti-social behaviour and the scope of the problem within the Dutch sports context, I have answered the following sub-question: “*how is anti-social behaviour defined by the management of NOC\*NSF and educational trainers of educational programs?*”

According to Robertson and Constandt (2021) sports organisations need to clearly determine and define what integrity within their organisation means. However, just as contemporary literature is unable to find a mutual understanding of integrity in sports (Gardiner et al., 2017), NOC\*NSF struggles with defining integrity and anti-social behaviour. I have shown that NOC\*NSF defines anti-social behaviour as ambiguous and subjective. Above that, communication channels and educational trainers use the different terms associated with anti-social behaviour and integrity inconstantly, creating confusion. Moreover, anti-social behaviour is seen as something that is subjective. In contrast, anti-social behaviour does correspond to laws and rules. Furthermore, emphasising that anti-social behaviour is personally determined makes it hard for others to recognise anti-social behaviour. Regardless of these three limitations, NOC\*NSF does provide an understanding with participants that anti-social behaviour entails more categories, namely sexual intimidation or abuse, discrimination, bullying and exclusion, aggression and violence, and intimidation. Above that, participants learn that anti-social behaviour can have a great impact on someone’s life, especially when there is an unequal power relation, gender differences, or an age gap, which is confirmed by Stirling (2008). In this respect, participants become aware of what anti-social behaviour is and how it can affect someone. Consequently, the educational programs contribute to a safe sports climate as non-athlete actors acknowledge that anti-social behaviour is also likely to occur in their sports club and, therefore, will be motivated to take measures against anti-social behaviour.

## The Construction of Educational Programs

To comprehend how educational programs contribute to a safe sports climate, I have answered the second sub-question: “*how are educational programs on anti-social behaviour constructed?*”

Educational programs of NOC\*NSF target non-athlete actors, which are board members, supervisors or coaches/trainers, and confidential contact persons, as NOC\*NSF believes that they are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe sports environment. This corresponds with the argument of Vertommen et al. (2016) that leaders in organised sport are responsible for creating a safe climate. The educational programs begin with elaborating on the definition of anti-social behaviour. Next, the obligations and duties of non-athlete actors are explained. These include a code of conduct, which in the literature is defined as a “code of ethics” (Robertson & Constandt, 2021). According to these authors, a code of ethics is necessary but also insufficient in managing integrity, and therefore, other initiatives should be implemented. These additional preventive measures that can be made are provided by NOC\*NSF. These include formal norms, as described by Hartman-Tews (2021). Examples of formal norms are the certificate of good conduct or a reference check. Addressing formal norms is, however, not enough to prevent anti-social behaviour from happening. Therefore, informal norms, which “encompass any kind of non-codified social rules” (Hartman-Tews, 2021, p. 174), should be targeted. The competitive context of sports is characterised by informal norms that allow, promote, or even reward anti-social behaviour. I have, however, shown that the educational programs do not focus on these antecedents of anti-social behaviour. Rather, educational programs provide reactive measures against anti-social behaviour. One of these measures is the duty to report sexual harassment, which according to Rhind, McDermott, Lambert, and Koleva (2014), should be encouraged, as reporting harassing behaviour early might prevent the development of sexually abusive relationships. Through case-based discussions and role-play, which are effective methods for ethics courses (Segal, 2013; Warnic & Silverman, 2011), participants learn what to do in certain situations where anti-social behaviour is exhibited. Therefore, educational programs contribute to a safe sports climate by making participants aware of their obligations and providing them with measures and tools that support them in addressing anti-social behaviour.

## Perceptions of Educational Programs

This interpretive research uses experiences, opinions, and perceptions of participants to explain how educational programs contribute to a safe sports climate. This knowledge is obtained through the last sub-question: “*how are educational programs perceived by non-athlete actors?*”

The opinions of participants show that educational programs are successful in transmitting basic knowledge on anti-social behaviour in the sports context. This plain information is mainly regarded as valuable by confidential contact persons who have just started this job. Especially the e-learnings are effective in providing knowledge about anti-social behaviour, what actions to take in specific situations, and providing information about institutions. Yet, the findings also present that participants miss profundity in the educational programs. Multiple participants indicated that they would like more in-depth conversations and discussions to create a mutual agreement on the best way to act in particular situations. The process of interpretation, dialogue, discussion, and mutual exchange across differences can create a moral community (Tappan, 2005). This means that through dialogue people learn about values, norms, and cultural beliefs, which in turn determines attitudes and behaviour. As such, behaviour can change by addressing values and norms. This study shows that in the sports context values differ from other contexts, which is in line with what is written by multiple academics (Kavussan, 2019; Kavussany & Ring, 2015; Moore et al, 2008; van de Pol et al., 2020; Shrout et al., 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2008). Yet, these values and the culture of sports (Cense & Brackenridge, 2008), which form the antecedents of anti-social behaviour, are not discussed in the educational programs. This study argues that the sensitivity of the topic of anti-social behaviour plays a part in this. Participants have, however, expressed the need for a conversation on morality or, better, a discussion on “the general way of acting morally” (Huberts, 2018, p. 20). As such, the educational programs contribute to a safer sports climate as it provides participants with plain information and through dialogue, participants can learn from each other.

To conclude, the findings of this study present that the educational programs provided by NOC\*NSF contribute, to a limited extent, to a safe sports climate. They do so by creating awareness on anti-social behaviour, which makes participants able to recognise anti-social behaviour and creates a sense of responsibility in non-athlete actors that, with the help of preventive and reactive tools, can address anti-social behaviour in their sports club. I argue that the contribution of educational programs is reduced because of three reasons. First, anti-social behaviour is defined as ambiguous and subjective, leading to confusion. Second, the ethical

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environment and antecedents of anti-social behaviour are not discussed and by maintaining a positive approach the core of the problem is not addressed. Third, there is a lack of in-depth discussion and knowledge exchange between participants and educational programs only provide limited tools and measures.

## Discussion

In this final chapter, I present the academic contributions of this study. Above that, I provide practical recommendations for NOC\*NSF. Next, I elaborate on the limitations of this research. Last, I give suggestions for follow-up research.

### Academic Contribution

Education and awareness raising on integrity within sports have only been studied for the topics of doping and match fixing (Mazzeo et al., 2017; Barkoukis et al., 2016; Moriconi & Almeide, 2018; Moriconi & de Cima, 2020). Therefore, this study contributes, as one of the first, to the body of knowledge on education on integrity in sports for the topic of anti-social behaviour.

Anti-social behaviour is prominent in sports and is often a result of the highly competitive atmosphere, creating an ethical environment where winning and the overemphasis of success can cause unethical practices (van de Pol et al., 2020). Contemporary literature on integrity education in sports, however, does not take this specific ethical environment into account. For example, Segal (2013) proposes three objectives for ethics courses in which ethical awareness and moral reasoning are increased. Yet, as I have shown, moral reasoning in sports is different compared to other contexts. Therefore, education on integrity must go further than teaching participants about moral awareness. This study contributes to the existing literature as it shows that education needs to change the shared values and social norms existent in the sports context. Therefore, education on integrity must raise awareness on the egocentric moral reasoning in sports, also described as “bracketed morality” by Kavussanu and Ring (2015).

The bracketed morality forms the basis for the antecedents of anti-social behaviour. The existing literature shows that emotional abuse is seen as necessary to achieve success (Stirling & Kerr, 2008), as is physical abuse and violence. Above that, the power differences present in the sports context are an important cause for anti-social behaviour. McCloughan et al. (2015) state that educational programs must be adapted to the context of sports, but do not explain how to do this. This study explains that educational programs can be adjusted to the sports context by addressing the specific causes for anti-social behaviour. Contemporary literature states that the motivational climate (Kavassuna, 2019) and the interpersonal coaching style (Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011) determine anti-social behaviour. I have shown the need to incorporate these features in educational programs, as this is not yet described in academic studies on sports integrity courses. Furthermore, I have also shown that although the providers of educational

programs know what these antecedents are, they do not address these in the educational trainings. The sensitivity of the issue of anti-social behaviour impedes discussing the topic in educational programs. Rather, people focus on the positive future. This study highlights the need for more research on discussing sensitive topics in educational programs.

Last, multiple academics have shown the need for educating facilitators and coaches on integrity (Mountjoy et al., 2015; Robertson & Constandt, 2021; Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2015). However, studies on the actual education on integrity aimed at these stakeholders are lacking. Robertson and Constandt (2021) have already expressed the need for a research agenda that focuses on better understanding the moral attentiveness of sports managers. Although this research does not specifically focus on the moral attentiveness of leaders, it does illustrate that, indeed, facilitators and management in sports organisations lack moral attentiveness as they are often unaware of what anti-social behaviour is and what causes anti-social behaviour. Robertson and Constandt (2021) then question how anyone can expect integrity to be managed effectively. This study shows that non-athlete actors can become ethical leaders by educating them about formal and informal norms. Therefore, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on the education of facilitators and leaders.

## Practical Recommendations

The analysis of this study results in three practical recommendations for NOC\*NSF. The first recommendation is to target more people. I provide suggestions on how to target them. The second recommendation focuses on the content of educational programs. The last piece of advice answers the question of NOC\*NSF whether an integrated approach on education on integrity concerning match fixing, doping, and anti-social behaviour is possible.

The first recommendation resulting from this research is to reach more people. In the first webinar that I attended, there were only six participants belonging to five sports clubs. Yet, there are about 26.000 sports clubs in the Netherlands. Despite learning that a group of participants should not be too big, I suggest that reaching more people will contribute to a safer sports climate as more people will become aware of the issue of anti-social behaviour. NOC\*NSF can do this in three ways. First, social media has proven to be a perfect medium for public awareness campaigns. The social media of CVSN has only 488 likes on Facebook and 128 likes on Instagram. Social media is a cheap yet human resource-intensive method that can be used to address the issue of anti-social behaviour and inform people about educational trainings. In relation to this, influencers can spread a message and target an audience. The use

of (ex) professional athletes to promote safe sports will be, according to the literature study, an effective way of targeting audiences. Especially now, after the Olympic Games have just finished, it will be interesting to use influencers. Third, and this is something that I came up with during the research, is to show videos or advertisement in the halftime of matches. Due to COVID-19 no audiences are allowed for sports matches. Thus, most people now watch their favourite team via livestream. If NOC\*NSF shows these already existing materials between the first and second half of a match, a broader audience, including athletes, can be targeted.

The second recommendation corresponds with the content of educational trainings. I found that people think they could get more out of the webinars. Participants are fond of the e-learnings and believe that it provides them with clear information, skills, and tools through practical assignments. Above that, the fact that they can do the e-learnings in their free time is a significant advantage. Participants told me they would not mind doing more preparatory work if this would mean that they can then dive even deeper into the materials during the webinar. Therefore, I suggest providing participants with more information beforehand, for example, definitions, facts, and figures, which can be discussed in the meetings. Consequently, the educational trainings can provide the participants with more in-depth information about the antecedents of anti-social behaviour. By addressing these antecedents, people learn what anti-social behaviour is, and will be able to recognise the causes of anti-social behaviour. As such, they can address the sources for anti-social behaviour beforehand to prevent anti-social behaviour from happening. This study has shown that specific values, like winning, are prioritised over other more ethical values. Therefore these more ethical values deserve more attention in the educational programs. This also means that NOC\*NSF must not avoid sensitive topics. Effective measures to increase morality are case-based discussions, role-play, and simulations.

Third, I argue that implementing an integrated approach for education on integrity can be helpful in addressing integrity violations. Although the analysis of the study presented here does not focus on match fixing and doping, during the data collection phase, I have found many similarities between doping, match fixing, and anti-social behaviour. Therefore, I state that it will be beneficial to further look into the possibilities for establishing an integrated approach for education on integrity.

## Limitations

There are three limitations to this study. First, due to the time constraint and COVID-19, I could only attend three educational programs, of which one consisted of two meetings. I could only participate in a meeting in an educational program for board members, coaches, and confidential contact persons. This was positive as those are the main target groups for the education of NOC\*NSF. Yet, as I only attended one educational training for each target group, I had no comparative materials. This could decrease the generalisability as I could not compare programs. To a certain extent, I have been able to solve this by finding saturation in my interviews. In further research, this limitation can be prevented by attending, if possible, more educational programs. The second limitation, which is also due to COVID-19, is that educational programs were only given online. Many participants told me that they think they would have experienced the training differently if they had attended a seminar in real life. This study is a representative image of educational trainings online, but the experiences of participants can be different in ‘offline’ educational programs. Therefore, this research can not provide a representative image of how ‘offline’ educational programs contribute to a safe sports climate. Third, this research cannot present a measurable outcome of education’s contributions to a safe sports climate. This research is interpretative and thus relies on the opinions of people. However, the views are reliable as all methods have been used consistently, topic lists have been followed, and interviews and observations have been coded in the same way. This process has been documented in the methodology chapter. Therefore other researchers can trace back the steps of this research.

## Suggestions for Follow-Up Research

Sports plays an important role in many people's lives and is proven to have positive impacts on people's lives. Yet, this study shows that there is a negative side to sports, which can be decreased by conducting more research. Therefore, I provide a few suggestions for follow-up research. First, relating to the question of NOC\*NSF on how to make sure that everyone in sports has basic knowledge of safe sports, it is interesting to learn more about how to reach ‘everyone in sports’. This research could focus on communication and targeting of the population. Second, a comparative study on whether the sports climate has changed in a sports club after participants attended an educational session will be interesting. Suggestions for this study can be to interview members of the sports club on the perceived safety of their sports club before and after their board has attended an educational program. This can show whether

## Discussion

participants took responsibility for changing the sports climate. Third, it will be useful to conduct a study on how to inform more athletes about a safe sports climate. I believe that athletes should be taught how to recognise antecedents of anti-social behaviour to become more resilient to anti-social behaviour.

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# Attachments

## Attachment 1. Topic List Participant Observations

- Introduction
  - Introduce interviewer
  - Main goal of research
  - Guarantee anonymity and privacy
  - Ask for permission: informed consent
  - Ask for permission: recording interviews and notes
- Setting
  - Online environment
  - Amount of people
  - Characteristics of people
    - Age
    - Gender
    - Athletes / coaches
    - Involved in which sport
- Communication
  - Use of language
  - Verbal communication between organiser and participant
  - Non-verbal communication between organiser and participant
  - Verbal communication between participants
  - Non-verbal communication between participants
- Content
  - Topics and themes discussed
  - Methods and (online) tools used
  - Use of supporting materials

## Attachment 2: Interview Guide for Participants

- Introduction
  - Introduce interviewer
  - Main goal of research
  - Purpose of interview
  - Guarantee anonymity and privacy
  - Ask for permission: informed consent
  - Ask for permission: recording interviews and notes
- Personal details interviewee
  - Name
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Sport
    - Which sport
    - How long involved
    - What organisations
    - What context
  - Participant in what training or educational program
- Sports climate
  - What would you describe as transgressive behaviour?
  - Have you ever heard of cases of transgressive behaviour in your sport?
  - Have you ever identified transgressive behaviour in your sport?
    - Directly (towards you)
    - Indirectly (in general)
    - If yes: can you tell me more about it? What happened, when did it happen, how did it happen, what did you feel in this moment, how did you respond?
  - How well informed are you about doping in sport?
  - Have you ever heard of cases of doping use in your sport?
  - Have you ever been involved in the use of doping?
    - If yes: why were you involved in the use of doping?
  - How would you describe match-fixing in sport?
  - Have you ever heard of match-fixing in your sport?
  - Have you ever experienced match-fixing?

## Attachments

- If yes: how did you respond to this?
- Trainings and educational program
  - How did you learn about this program?
  - Why did you sign up for this program?
  - Have you ever had previous education on
    - Doping
    - Match-fixing
    - Transgressive behaviour
  - What were your expectations of this program before participating?
- Opinions and experiences on attended trainings and educational programs?
  - What did you find most informative about this program?
  - What did you find most interesting about this program?
  - What did you find most surprising about this program?
  - What would you like to stay the same in this program?
  - What would you like to change in this program?
  - What did you learn from attending this program?
  - How would you explain this program to others?
  - Would you recommend this program to others?
  - Do you feel a need for more of these programs?
  - Did you have any occasion to share your thoughts and experiences from this program with others?
    - In what way?
    - With whom?

## Attachment 3: Interview Guide for Employees of NOC\*NSF

- Introduction
  - Introduce interviewer
  - Main goal of research
  - Purpose of interview
  - Guarantee anonymity and privacy
  - Ask for permission: informed consent
  - Ask for permission: recording interviews and notes
- Personal details interviewee
  - Name
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Organiser of what training or educational program
  - Experience of these trainings
    - For how long have you been giving trainings
    - In what contexts have you been giving trainings?
    - To whom have you been giving trainings?
- Sports climate
  - How do you regard the current sport climate with regard to *own speciality*?
  - Why do you think that trainings and educational programs are needed?
  - Is there anything you find problematic in the current sports climate?
  - What do you think needs to change in order to improve the safety of the current sports climate?
- Trainings and educational programs
  - How did this training or educational program come to exist?
  - What topics do you discuss in the training or educational program?
  - What methods do you use in the training or educational program?
  - How do you think that the training or educational program contributes to preventing *specific integrity* violations?
  - Do you think there are enough resources and knowledge on integrity available and accessible to educate athletes and coaches?
  - What is needed to improve the training or educational program?