Sport and Development Volunteerism: A Phenomenological Inquiry of Volunteers' Experiences in a Salvadorian Program

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Abstract

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Sport and Development Volunteerism: A Phenomenological Inquiry of Volunteers' Experiences in a Salvadorian Program

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Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) is implemented around the world as a tool to achieve various developmental outcomes. Despite its popularity, a growing body of researchers suggest that SDP is ineffective in achieving the developmental goals these programs purport. Furthermore, such programs can also enhance injustice and further perpetuate inequality. While there are a number of research-based positions on these issues, few studies have been conducted in exploring the volunteer experience in such programming and how the narrative of the volunteers themselves may shed new light on this discussion. This qualitative study attempts to capture the volunteer experience of participants in an El Salvadorian SDP program. These voices help to understand the volunteer experience, including the motivations to volunteer as well as the impact that volunteering has had on the participants' own lives. Three theoretical frameworks (critical theory, cultural studies theory and critical pedagogy) guided this study in examining the lived experiences of ten volunteers. Hermeneutical phenomenology served as the research design to collect and analyze the data gathered from a combination of interviews and observations from the field as a participant-researcher. This phenomenological study revealed the volunteer experience to be a transformational journey through time. This journey was experienced through three distinct phases

labelled the *investment, connection* and *commitment* phases. While the discovery of the volunteer journey emerged as a unique finding, other similarities were drawn with the existing literature base on volunteer motivations and impacts. The critical theoretical lens adopted by this study also revealed some contradictions including dependency, deficit, privilege and discrimination from the field. The implications of these findings suggest that SDP has an opportunity to reinvent itself as both a transformational and transformative vehicle for change. However, SDP organizations should implement volunteer vetting procedures and mandatory trainings to adequately prepare volunteers for their roles and responsibilities as well as guidance on cultural awareness raising. This study concludes with the recommendation that the SDP movement must adopt curriculum in critical pedagogy if it is to achieve its potential as a meaningful transformative tool.

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This dissertation would similarly not have been possible without the unconditional support of the AVOCA project. I am thankful to the charity's leadership for always supporting me throughout this process. I am even more thankful to the participants in this study. It is obvious to say but without their willingness and desire to be interviewed, this research would not have been possible. I hope the future of the AVOCA project can be supported by my work in this dissertation.

I naively started this process with no idea of where I would end up. While this has without doubt been the single most transformative experience in my life thus far, I feel full of enthusiasm about what the future may bring. I cannot help but feel I am only scratching the surface with what I want to learn more of and dig deeper into. It is absolutely true that the more one learns the more they realize they know so little. This is the bittersweet, double-edged-sword of discovery I feel is only right as one reaches this stage in their academic career. This dissertation has certainly been a journey that I will never forget and am truly appreciative to have experienced. Thank you to everyone that has been a part of this journey with me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair - Nelson Mandela

The powerful words of Nelson Mandela epitomize the popular belief that sport has the power to create positive change among people, communities, and nations. The messages surrounding sport are ubiquitous with a unique ability to transform our world and unite people like no other (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2012). As a result, sport has been adopted as a developmental tool and vehicle for change in combatting societal ills (Gilbert & Bennett, 2012; Levermore & Beacom, 2009). Today, this sport and development movement has become an empire in its own right, with programs and initiatives designed to overcome some of the deepest rooted issues faced by human kind including poverty, war and disease (Donnelly, Atkinson, Boyle, & Szto, 2011).

The ever-expanding sport and development phenomenon stems from an almost sacred-like doctrine that advocates sports participation as fundamental in maintaining basic levels of human health and wellness for all people. As such, sport has cemented itself as a cornerstone of Western society and has a long history of being championed as a pro-social force for multiple developmental trajectories (Hübner, 2015; Spencer-Wood & Blackburn, 2017). It is this rudimentary ideal of sports participation that has catapulted sport and development to new heights in the past 20 years, emerging as a pioneering

means to tackle some of the most devastating social inequalities and injustices faced by human society around the world.

A key ingredient to sport's elevated status is recognized by the positive health gains and development of young people (Green, 2010; Malina, 2010). Numerous empirical studies reveal the health benefits associated with regular sport and exercise for youth across all ages (Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010). Examples of these benefits include increased physical and mental health such as reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease (Bayne-Smith et al., 2004) and reduced anxiety (Kiluk, Weden, & Culotta, 2009). Other health-related improvements include the increase of cognitive development and increased academic performance, although further empirical evidence of these claims are needed (Bailey, 2005).

While sports have generally been heralded for their transformational abilities, it is crucial to acknowledge that sport participation is not inherently positive and there are many negative aspects to consider (Allender, Cowburn, & Foster, 2006; Coakley, 2011; Eley & Kirk, 2002). A wide range of long-standing examples of these antagonistic claims include the proliferation of deviant behaviors (Coakley, 1998), enhanced class, gender, and racial stratification (Sage, 1990) as well as systematic corruption and fraud evidenced in large sporting bodies and organizations (Brooks, Aleem, & Button, 2013). For youth, a similar assortment of examples stating the potential negative impact of sports participation includes the increased likelihood of injuries (Merkel, 2013), incremental stress on parent and child relationships (Harwood & Knight, 2009) as well as the

experience of abuse, harassment and bullying from coaches and peers (Stirling, Bridges, Cruz, & Mountjoy, 2011).

In light of such critiques, a host of scholars have challenged many of the fundamental assumptions of sport participation and its specific application in the field of sport and development (Black, 2010; Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2013; Darnell, 2010; Darnell, 2013; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Kidd, 2011; Rossi & Jeanes, 2016; Sanders, 2016; Shulenkorf & Adair, 2014; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013; Spaaij, Oxford, & Jeanes, 2016; Svensson, Hancock, & Hums, 2016). These concerns are ultimately raising significant doubts over sport's capabilities as a vehicle to transform some of the most endemic social issues of our time (Coalter, 2013). Despite this pushback, there is a continued commitment that is underpinned by the conceptual ambiguity and mythopoeic nature of sport (Colater, 2013). It is therefore prudent to explore the popular belief regarding sport as a prosocial force and further investigate the role of sport as a vehicle for meaningful change.

Background of the Study

In 2002 the United Nations (UN) released the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) as pioneering standards for raising the quality of life and championing human rights around the world (Darnell, 2013). Among these goals, several key areas were identified ranging from the eradication of extreme poverty, to nullifying the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as providing universal education for the world's poorest people (United Nations, 2002). The UN identified sport as one of the primary vehicles to achieve these goals (Peachey & Cohen, 2016). Subsequently in 2003 the UN opened the office of

Sport for Development and Peace (Levermore & Beacom, 2009). The formation of this office signified the legitimacy of sport as a developmental tool in meeting the MDG's agenda for under-developed countries (Schulenkorf & Adair, 2014). This advocacy still resides strongly within the UN, who in 2015 released their General Assembly Report outlining an agenda for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Within this report, it is stated:

> We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives (United Nations, 2015, p. 9).

This statement aligns itself with the aims of Sport for Development programs (SFD) which are defined by Schulenkorf and Adair (2014) to "engage people from disadvantaged communities in physical activity projects that have an overarching aim of achieving various social, cultural, physical, economic or health-related outcomes" (p. 3). Far-spread and diverse examples of such programming include HIV and AIDS prevention in Zambia (Njelesani, 2012); youth crime and antisocial behavior prevention in the United Kingdom (Kelly, 2012); transnational peacemaking in the Middle East (Giulianotti, 2011); and academic underachievement in the Pacific Islands (Kwauk, 2016).

While there are multiple trajectories of SFD that each target multiple strands of developmental concern, this research will be focusing on the Sport for Development and

Peace (hereon SDP) movement. These types of sport programming are specifically concerned with using sport to target conflict-damaged societies, potentially suffering from war and violence in an attempt to target peace and conflict resolutions (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014). Within this scope of SFD programming, Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) comment on the rapid growth of SDP organizations since the beginning of the 21st century, reporting that 295 organizations were registered with the International Platform on Sport for Development and Peace in 2010 (p. 284). Mwaanga and Mwansa (2014) document further evidence of SDP growth with 448 organizations involved in 2013.

Today, the ever-growing SDP movement spans the globe with programming that is designed, implemented and evaluated by a combination of private sector, multi-national corporations, non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations (NGO's), inter-governmental and governmental organizations, professional sports teams and smaller grassroots programs (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014; Kidd, 2008). This blend of such organizations represents the multiple entities involved in the SDP movement ranging from smaller to large scale programs. All of which claim to address the developmental needs of the communities and people they serve.

SDP organizations from across this spectrum implement programming broadly categorized by two different typologies – *sport plus* and *plus sport* models (Coalter, 2013). Sport plus organizations use sport as the central activity to achieve developmental objectives, whereas plus sport organizations' core concern is with addressing key social issues and might use some form of sporting activity as a non-central feature of their program (Coalter, 2013). Within these models, Giulianotti (2011) defines the practical

variance across SDP programming into three dominant types: 1) technical; 2) dialogical; and, 3) critical designs. A technical model is characterized as hierarchical, directive, and focused on solving a problem; a dialogical model adopts a 'training the trainers' approach and is more integrated within community social relations and providing leaders with the tools to serve their own communities; and a critical model is committed to inter-communal transformation, positioned as a facilitator for a range of diverse community groups (Giulianotti, 2011). Today the most common models are between the technical and dialogical with far fewer adopting critical designs.

Given the ever-expanding growth of SDP over the past two decades, a plethora of research has steadily developed seeking to understand the overall impact of SDP programming around the world (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014). Quests for positivist types of research typically guide monitoring and evaluation (M & E) research techniques in the field (Njelesani, 2012). Studies of this nature are usually conducted internally by SDP organizations as progress indicators to appease sponsors and other funding streams (Webb & Richelieu, 2015). These studies are typically quantitative in design and often track participation numbers and other numeric program growth indicators as a measurement of success (Webb & Richelieu, 2015). It is well understood how these programs are dependent on continuous funding streams that are systematically attached to the submission of positive progress reports, demonstrating program impact and growth (Kay, 2012). This type of transactional relationship can ultimately create tension between SDP organizers and their donors (Spaaij, Oxford, & Jeanes, 2016; Webb & Richelieu, 2015).

Such measurements often result in grandiose claims of sport as a "magic bullet" to solve societal ills (Schulenkorf & Adair, 2014). That is, a significant assumption that by merely participating in a form of organized sporting activity, this experience can cure a community of the challenges being faced. While these types of idealistic notions have drawn anecdotal criticism from scholars, there is still a significant gap in the research offering empirical and critical investigations of such programming (Burnett, 2015). In less frequent instances of programs deploying longitudinal research methods in support of SDP programming, most examples are often individual heart-felt narratives, packaged and presented by SDP organizers as evidence of their success (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). However, it is important to understand that this type of evidence can easily misconstrue the impact of development programming (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011).

More recently there have been calls for more rigorous, interpretive, and holistic frameworks that dig deeper into understanding the SDP movement and devising progressive steps forward based upon these findings (Burnett, 2015; Darnell & Black, 2011; Spaaij, Oxford, & Jeanes, 2016). These types of studies have the potential to yield credible and trustworthy accounts of how SDP programs function around the world and the potential impact they have in achieving their identified developmental goals (Darnell, Chawansky, Marchesseault, Holmes, & Hayhurst, 2016). This type of research is essential for programs to establish a more accurate understanding of their impact, particularly concerning sociologically complex and interconnected issues such as poverty, violence, inequality, war and disease. It was the aim of this research to make this type of contribution to the SDP literature base.

Statement of the Problem

It is this lacuna in sociologically rigorous and empirical research that has spurred the rise in scholarship targeting the essentialist claims of SDP (Coalter, 2013). In this sense, it has been suggested how the application of SDP programming is not only ineffective, but actually enhances various forms of inequality through the reproduction of oppressive ideologies and practices (Coalter, 2013; Rossi & Jeanes, 2016). For example, SDP programs are typically Western-based/Global North organizations and are therefore likely to engender dominant hegemonic beliefs regarding class, race, gender and sexuality (Cooper, Blom, Gerstein, Hankemeier, & Indovina, 2016). Additionally, some SDP programs have been critiqued as sites of reproductive neocolonial rule and extensions of imperialistic regimes (Darnell & Black, 2011; Devereux, 2008; Giulianotti, 2011). Field-based examples of this include the encouragement of hierarchy through authoritative decision-making in top-down leadership structures (Mwaanga & Prince, 2016), increased segregation of community members (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011) and the perpetuation of traditional gender roles that serve to maintain a patriarchal system of power disenfranchising women through sport (Njelesani, 2012).

While these conversations are raising vital concerns regarding SDP programming, it is important to recognize the majority of this research is predominantly focused on the program participants i.e. the recipients of SDP programming (Peachey, Bruening, Lyras, Cohen, & Cunningham, 2015). However, the participants themselves are only one stakeholder within the overall structure of SDP. These programs are also heavily dependent on a volunteer population that offer their time and skills to support the

program's goals (Meier & Stutzer, 2008). Despite these members having such an important role to play in the design, delivery and implementation of developmental curriculum, their experiences have often been overlooked throughout the SDP literature (Peachey, Cohen, Borland, & Lyras, 2011; Smith, Cohen, & Pickett, 2014).

Having a greater understanding of volunteer experiences including their motivations and the impact of these experiences on their own lives is vital if SDP organizations are to develop a more holistic appreciation of their programming. Some attempts in the broader literature base of international development and civic engagement explore volunteerism through the narratives of experience, motivations and impact, however these trajectories have typically been investigated separately (Campbell & Warner, 2015). Meanwhile, there is limited analysis that seeks to link the interconnections and interactions of the volunteer experience (Campbell & Warner, 2015). While there are some studies that try to better understand the motivations and impact of volunteers in wider and more popular sporting contexts (Eley & Kirk, 2002; Human & Van Graan, 2013), far fewer studies exist seeking to fully capture the volunteer experience and evaluate this impact specifically in SDP (Peachey et al., 2014). This should be a significant concern for the SDP movement as it fundamentally omits an in-depth appreciation and acknowledgement of the volunteers that are the face of the program and at the forefront of all developmental activities.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study then was to make an empirical contribution to this gap in the research focusing explicitly on SDP volunteers. Through an interpretive and

phenomenological research design, this study offers an insight and understanding into the volunteer experience for a specific SDP project based in El Salvador, Central America – A Voice of Central Americans (AVOCA). In an attempt to better understand these volunteer experiences, this study identified the motivations of volunteers participating in the AVOCA SDP project and then explored how these experiences had an impact on the volunteers' own lives.

Research Questions

This phenomenological inquiry was designed to understand the essence of volunteering in the AVOCA project. The primary research question below highlights the overarching purpose of this study – to explore and understand the lived experiences of volunteers in the AVOCA project. A further set of secondary research questions fleshes out the volunteer phenomenon, by seeking to understand volunteers' experiences during the AVOCA project Holy Week program, motivations for volunteering and the impact these experiences have had on their own lives.

Primary Research Question

1) How do participants experience and understand their role as volunteers in the AVOCA project?

Secondary Research Questions

1) What have been the participants' experiences as volunteers in the project?
2) What motivates the participants to volunteer in the project?
3) What has been the impact on the lives of the participants through volunteering for the project?

Significance of the Study

Based on the aforementioned critiques of the SDP movement, it is crucial that further research in the field be focused on better understanding the full scope of SDP programming. However, as the previous discussion suggests, there is a significant gap in the research that seeks to holistically understand the volunteer experience. It is vital then to interrogate the phenomenon of volunteerism in SDP, especially considering how volunteers are perceived as the conduit for the imposition of damaging developmental actions (Tiessen, 2011). Consequently, scholars have signaled a need for future research that focuses explicitly on volunteers in SDP (Peachey, Bruening, Lyras, Cohen, & Cunningham, 2015). Additionally, there is a requirement for similar types of investigations that explore volunteer experiences outside of the United States and other Western nations (Peachey, Lyras, Cohen, Bruening, & Cunningham, 2014). This study was a direct response to these calls being made for a greater contribution to address this gap in the SDP research from outside the US context.

Definition of Terms

The following section provides definitions for key terms and phrases that are used throughout this manuscript.

Experience includes an event or occurrence that leaves an impression on the volunteer. This could involve a practical contact and observation of an event or occurrence, or even an encounter with an individual that leaves a "feeling" (Campbell & Warner, 2016).

Impact is defined as a marked effect or influence on someone or something (Cambell & Warner, 2015). For this study, it is specifically referring to the impact of the volunteering experience on the volunteers themselves.

Motivation refers to the motivation to volunteer, which is a complex interplay between altruistic and egoistic elements (Hustinx, et al., 2010).

Social Majority represents the globally proportionate number of people reflected by what have previously been labelled as 'third world', 'developing/under-developed countries', 'global south' or 'minorities' (Esteva, Prakash, & Shiva, 2014). It is important to address the definitional contention of these traditional labels that perpetuate a coded language rationalizing deficit theories (Payne, 2005; Parmar, 2009). From this point forward, it is my preference to use the term 'social majority' or 'majority world' to describe this group.

Social Minority therefore represents the proportionately few people that hold the most economic and political power in our world (Esteva, Prakash, & Shiva, 2014). These groups have traditionally been labelled 'first world', 'developed', or 'global north' groups.

Volunteer is someone who dedicates a significant amount of time and effort to an organization without remuneration (Bang, Ross, & Reio, 2013). In this context, a volunteer refers to an individual that is volunteering for either an International Development or SFD/SDP organization. For this study, a volunteer is further categorized as being either an *international volunteer* or a *local volunteer*. An international volunteer

references a volunteer participant who resides outside of El Salvador and a local volunteer references a volunteer participant who resides inside El Salvador.

Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) is any attempt to engage people and communities from so-called underdeveloped countries in sport projects that have a fundamental aim of attaining specific development and peace objectives, including the UN's MDGs (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008).

Assumptions and Theoretical Framework

The objective of this study was to expand on existing literature seeking to better understand and improve SDP programming. This study lends an alternative perspective to this body of research through a phenomenological interpretation of the lived experiences of volunteers in an SDP program in El Salvador. Given the nature of this study and its objectives, it is crucial to identify the set of assumptions guiding this research. Research assumptions stem from both the chosen study design and theoretical frameworks that serve as a guide for any given study. It is vital for any researcher to clearly state what these guiding assumptions are (Patton, 2015). What follows next is an introduction to these assumptions with further detail relative to the methodological considerations of this study discussed in depth in Chapter Three.

Phenomenology has been identified as the research design to best answer the central questions posed by this study. Inherent within a phenomenological research design are a set of ontological and epistemological assumptions relative to beliefs about reality and knowledge. Research in the social sciences typically leans upon two main ontological and epistemological traditions which are positivism and interpretivism

(Clarke, 2009). Simply put, positivism positions the world as external and a single objective truth exists for any given phenomenon. Whereas interpretivism believes that multiple realities exist depending on the circumstances. Under interpretivist views, knowledge is socially constructed whereas with positivism, knowledge is objectively determined and perceived (Clarke, 2009).

To start this discussion, the similarities between phenomenology and an interpretivist paradigm will be shared. This will be followed by identifying two of the major assumptions found within phenomenological inquiry. The first assumes there to be an *essence* that is central to the nature of a particular phenomenon. The second assumes there are internal and external structures that formulate a particular phenomenon. These assumptions are crucial to note, as they offer the lens and perspective upon which this research will be shaped, delivered, and presented (Maxwell, 2013; Foss & Waters, 2016). Having established the assumptions maintained by a phenomenological research design, this section will additionally introduce the theoretical frameworks employed by this study. This will include a further set of assumptions inherent within the theoretical bricolage of critical theory, cultural studies theory and critical pedagogy.

Phenomenology. As this study was designed for phenomenological inquiry, this research automatically holds a set of assumptions that characterize this investigation. Before delving into the details of these assumptions, we must first understand the concept of a phenomena. Heidegger (1962) posits that "the expression '*phenomenon*' signifies *that which shows itself in itself*" (p. 51). Moreover, phenomena are something that can be brought to light as an experience (Heidegger, 1962). In order to understand such

experiences, there is a guiding set of assumptions about reality and knowledge that make this possible. However, the underlying assumptions of phenomenology as a social science are situated under the broader strokes of interpretivist thought. In order to better understand the assumptions connected with phenomenology it is necessary to first expand upon interpretivism.

At the core of interpretivism lies the belief that reality is both intersubjective and socially constructed (Butin, 2010). In other words, what we know about reality is shaped by multiple understandings consisting of a variety of themes and patterns. The objective of interpretive investigations is to navigate these multiple realities through a rigorous process of meaning making (Butin, 2010). The task for the researcher is to accurately present the multiple perspectives of their study participants. This process is harnessed by the researchers own lens and experiences with additional support from the guiding assumptions of their research design and theoretical frameworks (Butin, 2010). Interpretive thought supports this particular study as it seeks to explore and understand the multiple experiences of volunteers in the AVOCA project.

An interpretivist framework challenges more traditional ideas of reality framed by positivist views of natural science in a world that is in contrast deemed external to oneself under the broader scope of naturalism (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Positivism essentially assumes an objective reality to any given research phenomenon. A singular truth is thought to exist and it is the role of the researcher to unlock the gates that conceal this truth. In this type of research, there is a clear distinction between science and the personal experience of the researcher who will claim to maintain an objective goal of study

(Wilson, 2017). Given this distinction, interpretivist thought is more closely aligned with the goals of this research and needs further exploration as it relates to this phenomenological research design.

Building upon the base understandings of interpretivism, phenomenology maintains its own unique interpretations of truth and logic (van Manen, 2014). Phenomenological inquiry postulates multiple understandings and meanings of truth as van Manen (2014) writes, "the truth of something is not an all-or-nothing affair, but rather a complex and constant interplay between showing and hiding" (p. 343). This description speaks to the emergent nature of truth-seeking relative to the investigation of chosen phenomenon. The goal is not to reduce the meaning of a phenomena to a singular truth but to artistically present an insight to the nuanced nature of a phenomena relative to a unique core of people (van Manen, 2014).

While there are some major differences among phenomenologists, the 1859-1938 works of Edmund Husserl remain pivotal in defining phenomenology as an eidetic science that aims to capture the essence of pure experiences (Husserl, 1982). The first central assumption of phenomenology relates to the primordial meaning structures relative to the essence of a phenomenon. In other words, phenomenological research assumes there is an essence (or essences) to a shared experience (van Manen, 2014). This essence speaks to the nature and the core of a particular phenomenon and can be discovered by way of eidetic reduction (Husserl, 1982). It is to this first assumption this research attempted to capture and then explicate the essences of the volunteer experience in the AVOCA project.

The second assumption of phenomenology maintains that by exploring our lived experiences of a phenomenon, we can uncover and describe the hidden layers and components that make it so (van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology in this light assumes that by describing shared experiences as they relate to both individuals and to groups of people, the core nature of a chosen phenomenon can be unearthed by way of reflection (van Manen, 1990). van Manen (2014) speaks further to this idea that phenomenology, "inaugurates a reflective practice for generating insight and pathic understandings that radically challenge established assumptions and for testing the reach and truth of its findings" (p. 62). This added perspective is particularly vital for this study given its investigative nature seeking to challenge some of the assumptions surrounding SDP and volunteerism.

With these two guiding assumptions, this phenomenological approach will provide the basis for an initial descriptive account of the volunteer experiences, motivations, and impact in determining the essence of volunteering for the AVOCA project. However, in attempting an eidetic reduction of this phenomena and to try to understand and analyze the meanings of these descriptions, a trio of theoretical frameworks will guide this analysis and overall interpretation of the research findings. This study therefore draws upon a combination of critical theory, cultural studies theory and critical pedagogy as a theoretical bricolage to shape the discussion chapter of this research.

While not typically adopted to link theoretical ideas, the bricolage concept was first introduced as a means of applying multiple research methods when conducting a

study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). However for this research, this same concept will be adopted to draw upon different critical theoretical lenses to aid the researcher (as a theoretical bricoleur) to make sense of the data collected (Parmar, 2009). In what follows I offer an introduction to each of these theories with an explanation of how each contributed to this study.

Critical theory. Before expanding on the definition, history, and purpose of critical theory, it is important to offer a clear idea of what it means to be critical. To be critical is to go far beyond the dominant conception of pointing to the flaws or problems of something (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). It also goes past characterizations of someone as being negative and hypercritical (Facione, 1998); further still, it goes beyond labelling something as imply being bad (Wink, 2005). Instead, to be critical is to look outside of what is presented at face value in recognizing the social, cultural, cognitive, economic, and political contexts to any given situation or time (Kincheloe, 2008). Wink (2005) elaborates by stating how being critical means, "looking within and without and seeing more deeply" (p. 25). Like most theories, critical theory is complex and with continuous study and mastery critical theory can equip individuals with the tools to think critically about knowledge (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

This thought process is often defined as "thinking critically" (Cortez, 2016). Locklin and Posman (2016) describe the attributes of a critical thinker as someone with, "willingness to challenge personal beliefs and assumptions, recognition of the value of positions other than one's own, a complex, dynamic view of truth-claims and the ongoing development of persons and traditions, rejection of stereotypes, and intellectual

autonomy" (p. 5). Most important is for an individual to be accepting of new knowledge while also critical of their own belief systems in understanding how their thoughts and values may influence what they already know (Sensoy & DiAnegelo, 2017). It is often this inability to introspectively analyze our own beliefs that could lead to a falsified view that is mostly formed by one's own opinion (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

While the ability to think critically is often championed in our education system today, further thought should be given to the application of critical thinking in our world. For example, it is worth considering how this term has emerged as a buzzword that is commonly advocated as a central skill for students across all educational institutions (Cortez, 2016). Yet, critical thinking in this sense is deployed as a term that describes the mental processes of logic production, with inattention placed on the social and political critique (Cortez, 2016). Herein lays the difference between the educational appropriation of critical thinking skills and the ability for one to think critically in a manner that promotes social justice (Cortez, 2016). This misconception has produced a grey area in understanding what it means to think critically; making this distinction is necessary because the ability to truly think critically goes far beyond the surface level of understanding a particular phenomenon and instead digs deeper into meanings and understandings.

In the realm of academia and higher education, critical theory can be applied as a theoretical framework for conducting research. Fundamentally, the central feature of critical theory and its multiple trajectories is an explicit commitment to the emancipation of people in transforming oppressive conditions that exist in the world (Darder,

Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Levinson, 2011; Scott & Robinson, 2006). To achieve these emancipatory aims, critical theory seeks to challenge and disrupt structural systems of inequality that control marginalized groups and maintain the status quo of concentrated power among dominant stakeholders (Kincheloe, 2008; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). Critical theorists commit to wrestling with understanding these systems of power and how they create, maintain and perpetuate oppressive relations across society (Parmar, 2009).

Critical theory rose as a challenge to traditional academic thinking that failed to recognize the underlying oppressive structures of social institutions and processes (Levinson, 2011). While claiming the title of classical liberalism – heralded as the political theory to relieve society of monarchial authority and religious dogma – this liberal title carried false pretenses, since its messages of emancipation failed to provide equalilty. These works favored certain groups over others, thus elevating their social status while leaving many people's voices unheard. Levinson (2011) summarizes the purpose of a critical theoretical framework from a sociological perspective as, "those conceptual accounts of the social world that attempt to understand and explain the causes of structural domination and inequality in order to facilitate human emancipation and equity" (p. 2).

Critical theory was born within the Frankfurt School, Germany during the early 20th century (Butin, 2010; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Before the arrival of Nazi Germany and the subsequent Second World War, original critical scholars such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin developed the

early tenants of critical theory at the University's Institute of Social Research (Kincheloe, 2008; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). The works of these scholars were addressing the evolving nature of capitalism and its resulting impact on forms of domination, resulting in the social stratification of marginalized groups (Kincheloe, 2008). The seriousness of capitalist ideology was observed by Benjamin et al., (1996) as being "entirely without precedent, in that it is a religion which offers not the reform of existence but its complete destruction" (p. 289). Capitalism ultimately served as a central theme upon which most works were drawn (Hayes, 2011). The primary reason for this criticism towards capitalism concerned the ways in which this emergent ideology served to structurally control and oppress groups of people throughout all of society.

There are two fundamental assumptions inherent within critical theory that will be addressed below relative to this study. The first assumption relates to the misguided belief that people possess the ability to think freely within society. The second assumption concerns the belief that societies as a whole possess complete control in their belief systems. To better understand some of the core assumptions at the root of critical theory, it is wise to expand upon some of the rudimentary ideas facilitated by the works of these original scholars. It is similarly key to determine how these elements of critical theory could have been applied for the purposes of this study.

One such argument of critical theory focuses on our belief that people have the ability to think freely in society. Adorno (1973) challenges this assumption in his works on the "fiction of positive freedom" (p. 233). Instead, Adorno (1973) insists, "It can be shown that there is coercion both of what is being thought and of the thinker" (p. 233).

This position of critical theory maintains the idea of freedom of thought can be contested by the presence of control systems designed to actually inhibit and control one's freedom of thinking. For example, most forms of media outlets today contain advertising campaigns designed to encourage the subscriber to express their apparent freedom of choice through consumerist behaviors (Dickens, 2018). This is an important element for this research to better understand how sporting organizations could similarly influence ideas concerning the power of sport and its transformational abilities. Particularly when all forms of sporting organizations from the professional arena to SDP are heavily influenced by significant amounts of sponsorship by large corporations, often with their own self-serving interests.

Along similar lines, Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) wrote on the culture industry and critiqued the increasing cultural control within a capitalist society. Specifically, Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) speak to the growing universality of cultural industries including television and radio, and how these industries produce mass messages of propaganda techniques that engender capitalist values (p. 123). For example, one such behavior that has been conditioned in Western society is the obsession with excessive materialistic accumulation (Bartolini & Sarrocino, 2017). In Putnam's (2000) research, he links increased materialist values to an increased attitude of "free agency" resulting in decreased levels of civic engagement including "less volunteering, less philanthropy, less trust, less shared responsibility for human life" (p. 259).

Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) refer to this coordinated entertainment and culture industry as being conditioned and socialized into the minds of all society to

participate and consume (p. 127). The sameness of the culture industry carries a subordinating effect, trapping society into a system of work and material consumption, "occupying men's senses from the time they leave the factory in the evening to the time they clock in again the next morning" (p. 131). It could be conceived that sport similarly plays a major role in the culture industry, given how it transcends all media forms and is an integral part of Western society and popular culture. Examples of how this obsession is typically reflected can be seen through a range of everyday consumption of professional and collegiate sports, increased opportunities to gamble on sport event outcomes and the increased professionalization of youth sports (Coakley, 1998). Therefore, the messages communicated through sport should also be critically considered as they relate to the occupation and subordination of collective minds.

One of the key messages conveyed through the overwhelming culture and media driven presence is the notion that sport champions individual choice as the primordial vehicle for upward mobility and societal change through sport. For example, these successful athletes picked themselves up from their own bootstraps and through dedication and hard work, wrestled their way to the top. This same idea is automatically assumed with SDP programs in how they can offer a vehicle of transformation for all. These ideas relate to Max Horkheimer's works of mass culture, and how he was particularly concerned with the demise of true individuality within a growingly fragmented society. Witnessing an imbalance between individual freedom and the common good, Horkheimer (1947) stressed the need for a harmonious equilibrium between one's individuality and a healthy society. Horkheimer (1947) explains, "The

most esteemed personal qualities, such as independence, will to freedom, sympathy, and the sense of justice, are social as well as individual virtues" (p. 135). Therefore, in a growing society of free enterprise that encourages unrestricted competition for individuals to excel with little to no regard for others, this relentless self-investment splinters the collective fabric of a communal society (Horkheimer, 1947). This perspective could similarly be used as a lens to critique messages from the SDP movement.

One final critical theoretical scholar of interest is Antonio Gramsci whose concept of hegemony will provide a theoretical construct in order to conduct critical understandings of certain phenomena. Gramsci's theory of hegemony is central in exploring power relations and how they are maintained in society. Gramsci (2007) claims that dominant groups exercise social hegemony throughout society (p. 12). In other words, there are certain groups of people identifiable by different labels such as race, class, gender and religion whose interests shape the world for all other groups to live within.

Kincheloe (2008) describes this construct of hegemony as, "the process used by dominant power wielders to maintain power" (p. 65). This hierarchy of domination is typically maintained in two ways. First, by apparatuses of coercive power that enforce discipline and punishment on those who do not consent. For example, multiple states around the world deploy their increasingly militarized police forces as a mechanism to physically maintain control of groups of people. Examples of such force can be seen during acts of protest or demonstration in which crowds of people are either being

physically herded or forced into dispersion. Either way, their movements are being controlled and their will to protest is often challenged by the threat of physical force.

Second, domination can also be maintained in non-physical, yet arguably more deceiving and insidious ways. Under these conditions, hegemony still perpetuates an oppressive order preserving the status quo of the dominant group. Once more the media serves as a major vehicle of subliminal messaging to manipulate and control beliefs and behaviors of certain groups. For example, numerous analyses of the film industry highlight the perpetuation of racial prejudice and stereotypes that convey messages of white supremacy and the subordination of people of color (Hunt, 2019). These roles are embodied through characters and actors that are aired worldwide carrying messages that normalize oppressive social hierarchies based on race and ethnicity (Hunt, 2019). The biggest danger of this being how these messages are often internalized and therefore normalized by well-intentioned people who are simply unaware of the subliminal nature of such messaging. This form of control then seems less devious given the combination of innocence and ignorance upon which it is often transmitted and perpetuated.

Similar analyses can be compared to sports with the proliferation of athletes who are often catapulted to super hero status in society (Smith, 1973). The mainstream spotlight awarded to sporting stars elevates them as figures of worship. It could be suggested that certain sporting stars exhibit behaviors that are desired by the dominant groups and their accomplishments are therefore championed as model behaviors for society to admire and aspire to. For example, the professional athlete represents a social actor who embodies a strong work ethic as well an unwavering dedication and sacrifice to

mastering their discipline. These are examples of how sport can be used as a vehicle for socialization of preferred values and behaviors (Nucci & Young-Shim, 2005). While admirable traits, these characteristics seldom waiver beyond the field of their sport and rarely test the boundaries of society or challenge the status quo.

For athletes that do use their profile for political or social protest, they are often lambasted and heavily critiqued for daring to step outside the conformist ideal that is often desired by our sporting heroes. For example, NFL football star Colin Kaepernick used his public profile to protest racial inequality and police brutality among black people (Root, 2018). There is also an entertainment factor that sport can offer keeping the masses occupied from engaging in politically charged discussions. Therefore, the worship of sporting heroes helps to maintain public obsession with sports entertainment ultimately maintaining social order and subordination.

Gramsci (2007) asserts that domination is also maintained through "intellectual and moral leadership" and is a particularly powerful hegemonic activity that is meant to be unseen or invisible (p. 59). Here Gramsci (1971) further highlights "laissez-faire liberalism" in which the subaltern groups are suspended at the mercy of the intellectual hegemony of the ruling classes (p. 160). In other words, there are a set of belief systems generated and maintained by dominant groups that are unquestionably adopted by subordinate groups serving to uphold a social hierarchy. Kincheloe (2008) expands on Gramsci's idea through the construction of "common sense" notions that foster and perpetuate dominant beliefs, making it possible for people to consider certain ideas about their world as true.

A simple example of this thought is at the core of this research. That is the commonly held belief that sport serves as an appropriate means of developmental action throughout the world. While this notion has more recently been contested, it is still a core belief that sport positively impacts individuals, groups and societies. Gramsci's theory of hegemony was therefore adopted as a lens to observe and understand the relationships of power among the international and local volunteers in the AVOCA project. This perspective was particularly useful in examining the roles and responsibilities of the volunteers and how these relate to leadership positions within the program.

At this juncture it is key to recognize the challenge in continuing to describe critical theory. One of the major difficulties is due to the ever-expanding growth of this theory and the multiple trajectories that blossomed throughout the later part of the 20th century (Kincheloe, 2008). Critical theories try to avoid being too specific in their focus as critical scholars understand there must be room for disagreement (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). In addition, a major tenet of critical theory is that context matters a great deal, so there is no one size fits all definition.

As volume in critical scholarship continued to increase, so too did the responses around the world to its emancipatory ideas, fueled by growing frustrations with capitalism and its tightening grip on the values of social democracy (Kincheloe, 2008). As Kincheloe (2008) wrote, "In this context, critical theory questions the assumptions that societies such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the nations in the European Union, for example, are unproblematically democratic and free" (p. 48). This is crucial to acknowledge for this study in particular, given how most international

development enterprises are administered through these nations, unanimously purporting values of freedom and democracy throughout their work.

Cultural studies theory. The second strand of this theoretical bricolage is based on Cultural Studies theory that was developed at the University of Birmingham, England at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) (Rodman, 2015). In a world that is constantly evolving and changing, both critical theory and the theory of cultural studies are married to examining constructs of power in order to challenge inequalities that may lead to human suffering and well-being. Cultural Studies theory is also based upon the premise that society is socially constructed and due to its fluidity is always changing (Parmar, 2009).

Kincheloe and McLaren (2011) provide one such definition of cultural studies as, "an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes counter-disciplinary field that functions within the dynamics of competing definitions of culture" (p. 305). This statement speaks to the broad complexities congruent with this theory. This is also what makes cultural studies so flexible and powerful given its relative looseness as an academic discipline; at the same time this dynamic also presents some challenges as it contributes to a lack of authority and clear ground on its application (Rodman, 2015).

The theory of cultural studies moves beyond dominant and hegemonic disciplines by way of recognizing "other" discourses (Parmar, 2009). It can be viewed as a theory not limited to the study of popular culture but has emerged as a theory to challenge traditional academic disciplines stemming from the West (Parmar, 2009). By incorporating the voices of otherwise marginalized groups, this allows for the analysis

and evaluation of the hierarchical structures that both create and maintain a socially stratified system of cultural division (Parmar, 2009; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). One such quest undertaken by cultural studies is to explore alternative epistemologies that move in unimagined ways outside of the dominance of Western knowledge (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). The purpose of this endeavor in a broad sense is to redefine notions of democracy in terms of recognizing multiplicity and difference (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011).

An example of how cultural studies has played a significant role in the development of critical theory was to challenge the dominant beliefs around how knowledge is attained through the public education system. For example, the discovery of the United States land mass by Christopher Columbus is often presented as a great achievement of Western and Christian culture. This event has been celebrated by way of physical landmarks in multiple Western cities and even honored as a national holiday in some Western countries. The theory of cultural studies offers an alternative lens upon which to contest this period in history. An alternative perspective may instead remember this moment as a devastating consequence of Christian and European expansion throughout the world that resulted in the mass genocide of an indigenous population who had lived on these lands long before the arrival of Columbus (Zinn, 2006).

The lens of cultural studies theory similarly plays a crucial role in guiding this study. Given its role in challenging Western systems of knowledge, the cultural studies perspective fundamentally helps to challenge many of the common-sense notions of SDP. Instead, this approach offers an opportunity to see past the universalist ideas intimately

tied to modernist developmentalism and sport participation as is understood today. Moreover, this lens can propose alternative ideas and beliefs surrounding the role of volunteers in developmental programming. This could ultimately lead towards the reinvention of volunteerism and what this entails in the realm of SDP and beyond.

Like critical theory, cultural studies theory carries some challenges in its application to academia. Rodman (2015) passionately speaks to the definitional contention of cultural studies theory and warns against any claims that attempt to place the theory among other traditions (p. 27). This is also why Rodman (2015) highlights some difficulties with cultural studies theory as it often suffers from definitional misuse, misappropriation and misunderstanding (p. 35). While this may be true, Rodman (2015) eventually attempts to navigate his own definition of the term:

> Its central purpose is twofold: (1) to produce detailed, contextualized analyses of the ways that power and social relations are created; and (2) to circulate those analyses in public forums suitable to the tasks of pedagogy, provocation, and political intervention. (p. 39-40)

Given Rodman's (2015) definition, cultural studies could be perceived as the connection between critical theory and critical pedagogy. As suggested above, the first purpose of cultural studies theory is dedicated to the diagnoses of structural domination. The second purpose then relates to transformative engagement, capturing the cycle of analyses and action. This is where the connection to critical pedagogy unfolds.

Critical pedagogy. This section will present critical pedagogy as the final theory to complete the trio of theories making this bricolage. As in the previous sections, a brief

background of the development of critical pedagogy will be offered as well as a definition of this theory. The majority of this section will lean upon Paulo Freire's writings as the primary scholar to help unpack the key features of critical pedagogy relative to educational philosophy and research. Some major points will be emphasized as they might have been utilized as a lens for this study in the realm of SDP. This section will then conclude the assumptions and theoretical frameworks for this study.

Wink (2005) offers a concrete definition of critical pedagogy as the "teaching and learning that transforms us and our world for the better" (p. 67). Critical pedagogy can be further described as a cyclical process of learning, relearning, and unlearning, resulting in the unpacking of our own lived personal experiences, rethinking our histories, and rewriting our world (Wink, 2005). It is this pedagogy of transformative education that offers a lens to critically reflect, name and act on (Wink, 2005).

One of the most influential critical pedagogues to have embodied this theory was the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (Parmar, 2009). Freire was best known for his adult literacy programming for social majority communities whose adult populations were considered illiterate (Morrow & Torres, 2002). The impact of his scholarly work and theoretical challenge to the status quo was such that it resulted in him being imprisoned and then exiled from his native Brazil (Giroux, 2011). Freire's methods were not only limited to teaching people to read and write, but empowering oppressed groups to critically understand their social conditions in ways that helped them see how their suffering was through no fault of their own. Instead, they were shackled to an oppressive culture of silence and Freire's practice was one of freedom that helped to humanize and

empower by way of "naming their world". This translated as the oppressed group being able to recognize and identify the structures in place that were maintaining their state of oppression (Freire, 1970).

Fundamentally, Freire's understandings of critical pedagogy were centered upon the belief that every human is capable of critically analyzing the world and engaging in a dialogue with others to transform it. The practice of dialogue was not simply reduced to the teaching technique of interaction commonly represented by social scientists today (Apple, 1999). Rather, Freire's interpretations of dialogue were rooted in an epistemological practice of learning and knowing, since it was Freire's belief that only the oppressed group themselves were capable of naming their world. Therefore, there must be a curiosity of knowledge that fuels the dialogical relationship between theory and practice in order to transform. Freire (1970) labelled this as "praxis", representing the combination between theory and action to name the word and change the world (p. 51). While this was Freire's take on educational philosophy, it was not a common theme in mainstream public education.

Freire and other critical theorists believed that state based public education was used as an oppressive weapon to dominate and reproduce structural inequality among large populations (Apple, 1999). Freire (2000) described this oppressive system as a "banking model" of education and teaching. This method of education assumed that teachers, in a position of authority, held a body of knowledge that was to be deposited into the empty "receptacle" minds of the students (p. 72). This oppressive pedagogy would result in the conditioning of minds incapable of developing a critical

consciousness, also termed “conscientização” (Freire, 2000). The result of absent conscientization is that people fail to have confidence in their own knowledge, ability and experiences, ultimately doubting themselves and what they know (Wink, 2005). The goal of raising conscientization is to move people beyond the passivity of what they think they don’t know, to the realm of having confidence in what they do know and harnessing this feeling towards actions for change (Wink, 2005).

In response to these observations, Freire developed his ideas of critical pedagogy to combat the structural hegemonic forces in place by dominant groups in society. Through a medium of dialogue, Freire (2000) formulated a pedagogy of praxis to develop critical consciousness. This method of “praxis” involves a continuous process of action and reflection based upon contextual problem-posing, supporting oppressed groups to challenge and transform their lived realities (hooks, 1994). Giroux (2011) further describes this pedagogical process of “creating those democratic public spheres where individuals can think critically, relate sympathetically to the problems of others, and intervene in the world in order to address major social problems” (p. 13).

Since Freire’s initial work with peasants in Brazil in the 1970’s, a handful of critical pedagogues developed through the influence of his works. Most notable are the likes of Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, bell hooks, and Myles Horton to name a few (Kincheloe, 2008). All of these scholars acknowledge the dichotomous capabilities of the education system, that is, the capacity for schools and education to serve as either a dominating oppressive force or a medium for conscientization and liberation (Kincheloe, 2008). The educational possibilities presented through these works align with the

similarly dualistic relationship concerning SDP and its potential use as either a domineering or emancipatory vehicle.

Collectively, it is this focus of wanting to understand, explain and transform that supports the interpretive and exploratory phenomenological research design of this study. Rather than simply offering a descriptive interpretation of multiple volunteer experiences, this research attempted to explore the meanings of these experiences and how the volunteers themselves understand these through a critical lens. It is important to stress the value in embracing a blend of critical theory, cultural studies theory and critical pedagogy in this way, as it seeks to challenge and question dominant ideas and values that serve a major portion of the world's population, with the goal of wanting to understand and thus improve seeking equitable solutions to social problems for all peoples.

Limitations

Like all research, this study possessed potential limitations that were vital to consider. It is important to remember that not all research is perfectly designed and there are always trade-offs (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Additionally, the process of delineating the limitations of a study can help the researcher remain in tune with the boundaries of their work (Glesne, 2011). Such boundaries often transcend multiple research trajectories based upon the chosen research design and methodology. For example, one limitation with qualitative research concerns the inapplicability for making generalizable conclusions from the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). However, the conclusions generated may well be transferable and it is up to the reader to decide about the study's usefulness in other settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Phenomenological research design carries forth a small number of inherent limitations that are equally as important to consider. First, one such limitation is often associated with the positionality of the researchers themselves and their ability to effectively "bracket out" their own personal experiences of the chosen phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This is a particularly important consideration as the researcher has their own personal set of assumptions they will inevitably lean upon when interpreting the data (Creswell, 2013). It is important for the researcher to highlight what these assumptions may be and lay out their own subjectivity before conducting the research. This process helps the reader to understand what biases may exist, but also gives credit to the researcher for recognizing how these could influence their study and address how these might be mitigated.

In view of this research, I have chosen to adopt the arguments of Heidegger who advocates that any interaction with a phenomenon is subject to influences carried forth by the researcher (Mulhall, 2005). As the researcher for this study, it is not possible to separate myself entirely of my influences given my own historicity. Instead, I ensure I am aware of these influences and I use them as part of my pre-understanding, fore-sight and fore-conception, to interpret the lived realities of volunteers in the AVOCA project. This is a cyclic process that sees data being co-constructed by both the research participants and their experiences as well as myself as the researcher whose perspective is influenced by my background. This approach speaks to van Manen's (2014) advice, suggesting that every phenomenological inquiry demands its own unique approach and application of the

epoché and reduction. What follows next then is my attempt to highlight my own assumptions and biases as they relate to my experiences and background.

Self as Researcher

In an attempt to own my perspective, I would like to offer an introspective self-exploration that demonstrates my own self-awareness upon embarking on this study. It is crucial to acknowledge these elements as I am the main instrument of this qualitative research (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, recognizing my positionality and self as researcher plays a key part in the reliability and trustworthiness of conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Patton, 2015). Outlining my own positionality involves the critical self-reflection of my own "frames of knowledge" and how what I have come to learn as knowledge throughout my own life has indeed been socially constructed (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Moreover, the idea of outlining researcher bias and assumptions is critical in the realm of phenomenology in addressing concerns of research credibility (van Manen, 1990; van Manen, 2014). Husserl (1974) proposed the need for complete bracketing of a researcher's beliefs and assumptions so as not to penetrate the objective demands of phenomenological inquiry. Husserl (1982) coined this the *epoché*, and described this as the ability to parenthesize our own objectivities and our own natural attitudes in an attempt to discover a new scientific domain (p. 60-61). This would mean that while the researcher is aware of their own perspectives they would not allow them to influence their study. However, it is important to comment here on the contradictory dispositions

concerning researcher bias and the corresponding techniques to counter such biases, especially as they relate to phenomenological inquiry.

Heidegger (1962) opposed the notion of complete researcher objectivity and insisted that the suspension of one's belief system is an impossible task. Rather, the researcher must first acknowledge themselves as individuals that cannot detach from historical, political, social or cultural contexts (Heidegger, 1962). Instead, individuals possess a set of pre-understandings and fore-structures. Heidegger (1982) suggests that all people possess pre-ontological understandings of *being* as a necessary condition and these must be explicitly projected (p. 281-282). In keeping with Heidegger's views of researcher positionality, this short reflective piece will intentionally project my own pre-understandings and fore-structures as they relate to the topic of investigation.

First, I introduce my own journey to this research with a brief narrative that describes the professional and academic pathway leading me to this point. I then offer a description of my own personal experiences within the chosen phenomenon of interest and attempt to explicate my own assumptions and biases as they may relate to this research (Creswell, 2013; van Manen, 2014). Finally, I offer a personal account of my experiences in the country of El Salvador, providing my own anecdotal interpretation of the site for this research based on a five-year history of visiting the country. This process will transparently offer my positionality as a researcher for this study.

It is common in qualitative research that the overall significance is rooted in the author's own personal and professional experiences. Specific to this study, both my own personal and professional experiences have predominantly been in organized sports and

SDP. As a once-aspiring soccer player in the United Kingdom, I recognized the challenges of succeeding as a professional athlete and began identifying a pathway into sports coaching as a profession. This decision would see me on a journey through higher education as a first-generation college student. This path led me to a graduate degree program in the United States at Ohio University in 2012-13. At this time, I was also invited to volunteer for the AVOCA project as a lead coach and coach educator.

As a relatively naïve student, I embraced this experience without any level of critical consciousness or awareness of the social, political, and economic complexities of El Salvador. Additionally, I had limited knowledge of the SDP movement and the body of literature that spawned around this topic. However, my first experience volunteering with the AVOCA project during the Holy Week program in 2013 was of great enjoyment and fascination. This was a humbling experience and I left the country without realizing how these 10 days would have a profound impact on my life.

It was not until two years later after I completed a master's degree and returned to graduate school as a doctoral student the AVOCA project would reappear in my life. I vividly remember my first semester back in graduate school and how it transformed the way in which I viewed the world. Specifically, I was enrolled in education-centered courses that helped me understand our educational history from a critical perspective. The most impactful classes contained readings, in-class discussions and assignments heavily focused on issues of social inequality and injustice. As a white, heterosexual, English speaking male, I was quickly made aware of my own privilege and how this has such a deep impact on how I experience the world. I was so completely captured by my

own rising consciousness that I continued to enroll in critically themed graduate courses, covering topics in education, philosophy, leadership and development.

The steep learning curve that ensued inspired a quickly sharpening critical lens that allowed me to start analyzing my own experiences volunteering for the AVOCA project. Coupled with my first reading of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, my focus quickly narrowed in wanting to further explore critically themed literature and studies conducted around sport and development. I was further motivated when I began discovering a small community of scholars dedicated to the fusion of critical theoretical frameworks within the SDP movement. At this time, I realized the unique opportunity I could have as a trainee scholar in this body of research. I believed I could contribute with the unique access I was fortunate to have through the AVOCA project.

Since 2015, I have continued my annual participation in the program both as a volunteer and researcher. In 2016 I co-authored a pilot study consisting of a needs-analysis and asset-mapping report. This report was shared among the AVOCA leadership, offering feedback from participant experiences and ideas from some of the local volunteers for future programming. Our report surfaced a set of strengths and assets from the communities as well as opportunities for AVOCA to grow and expand from the recommendations of the community members themselves. Major assets demonstrated the unshakeable spirit of the local volunteers. This was epitomized by their humility, their pride in their communities and their desire for solidarity among all people. These characteristics typify my experiences with the Salvadorian population outside of AVOCA, speaking to the warmth I have felt every time I have visited this country.

My personal role within AVOCA has also evolved over this time. In 2017 the AVOCA program applied for official charitable status in the United Kingdom and El Salvador. With this came leadership reorganization and I was offered the opportunity to serve as a trustee member of the charity upon which I humbly accepted this position. My role as a trustee is still predominantly focused on developing educational content for the program and overseeing the delivery of the camps and clinics alongside other volunteers. Further duties include an increased responsibility for the sustainability and growth of the charity as well as ensuring the recruitment of volunteers and general organization of the annual Holy Week program.

With my own experiences serving as the catalyst, I am curious to explore the ways in which other participants experience and understand their role as volunteers. The traditional narrative surrounding international development leads us to believe that 'Western/First World/Global North' inhabitants possess the secret ingredients to a happy, successful and fulfilling livelihood, free from oppression and injustice with equal opportunities for all. It is supposedly our way of life – our progressive thinking, our ideas and beliefs – that should be shared in order to bridge the gap between the so-called "developed" and "underdeveloped" worlds. However, my multiple experiences in El Salvador suggest a different dynamic to the relationship between the social minority and social majority world.

After each visit to El Salvador, I am consistently struck by the magnitude of contentedness that is so often displayed. People are grateful and appreciative for what they have extending far beyond the material means of possession. There appears to be

appreciation for the simplicity of life and the ways in which people navigate their daily routines. Little energy or emotion seems lost on the pursuit of things that are not necessary. I have further noticed a calming sense of resistance against the desire for wanting anything more than might be needed.

I recognize these descriptions may appear to romanticize the way of life in these communities; however, this is not my intent and by no means am I trying to essentialize these characteristics. As a direct result of poverty, there are many challenges faced by the people in the communities whom I have visited over the years. However, there is something noticeable about the warmth, resilience and determination of the people I have encountered during my visits. These descriptions are based solely upon my own interpretations of my time working with the people in these communities over a five-year period.

Parallel this to the social minority world where there seems to be an obsession with the accumulation of excess, often resulting in surplus resources that succumb to waste. Not only am I inclined to reject the saviorist notion that we – the social minority – possess all the answers, but in fact, I believe it is us who should be learning from the people that have historically been subconsciously labelled as “less than” or “others” – the social majority.

Developmental work has the potential to unite people for mutual interests of collectively helping one another to learn and grow. Perhaps if there was a shift in the narrative surrounding developmental action we could reinvent the development movement as a transformative tool. By recognizing the reciprocal potential between the

polarized socioeconomic ends of our society, developmental programming could meaningfully bridge the vast divide witnessed across multiple societies around the world.

From this position, I am determined to contribute to the growing body of literature that seeks to challenge some of the non-contested and often invisible assumptions about the power of sport. It is through the avenue of exploring the volunteer experience in the AVOCA project that I wish to shine further light on an area that has been relatively untouched in the SDP literature. My life-long socialization through sport as an athlete, a coach and a fan motivates me to witness sport succeeding in such developmental endeavors. My recent grounding in academia, however, has given me the tools to examine the bold claims made by sporting enthusiasts – who, perhaps, are naïvely unaware of such potentially damaging repercussions of SDP programming and the complex interconnected issues that bind social inequality and injustice.

Summary and Chapter Organization

In summary, this research attempted to add to the critical SDP literature base by offering a phenomenological understanding of the volunteer experience with participants in a Salvadorian program. Specifically, this research explored how participants experience and understand their roles as volunteers, drawing connections between volunteer motivation and impact.

Chapter Two lays the foundations of this research with a rigorous literature review consisting of works deemed relative to the formation of this study. Chapter Three of this study provides the research design and methodology sections that identify what data was collected, how the data was collected, and how this data was then analyzed.

Chapter Four presents the findings of this research before offering a discussion of these findings including recommendations for the future of SDP in Chapter Five.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Within this chapter I present the contextual, historical and theoretical basis upon which this research was designed. In order to better understand the proposed phenomenon of volunteer experiences in SDP, it was vital to explore the key strands of existing literature that have led me to this place of curiosity and inquiry. With the Salvadorian context as the base of this study, it was crucial to acknowledge some of the key theoretical ideas at play and synthesize these ideas across a spectrum of related disciplines. Furthermore, it was essential to recognize previously applied research attempts from similar fields that played a role in shaping the ideas, significance and design of this study.

The first section of this chapter lays the contextual landscape of this research with an analysis of the social, political and economic factors at play in El Salvador. Building out from this context, this chapter presents the foundations of international developmental theory connecting its evolution to the present day. This narrative offers a firm structure upon which the SDP movement will then be situated. A vital component of the SDP discussion will flesh out the previously identified critiques of this movement. I will then broaden the literature review to capture research on civic engagement and volunteerism for both international development and SDP. In the final section of this chapter, I will re-center the focus on describing the recent and existing SDP efforts in El Salvador in more recent times.

El Salvador

Phenomenological inquiry demands researcher appreciation that demonstrates an awareness and deep understanding of the context upon which a study is being conducted. It is crucial at this point to build upon my own subjective account of El Salvador presented in the previous chapter. What follows is an interconnected analysis that offers a rich historical account of key events and factors that have made a significant contribution to the present-day climate in El Salvador. It is vital for the reader to first grasp an informed interpretation of this research site before delving further into the literature base informing this study.

Social, political and economic context. Situated between Honduras and Guatemala in Central America, the population of El Salvador sits under seven million people, with the capital San Salvador containing over one million residents (United Nations, 2015). The region of Soyapango – a suburb of San Salvador – has approximately 300,000 people living in this area. El Salvador, like all Central American nations is culturally rich in Spanish heritage with over 50% of the population being Roman Catholic and over 30% being Protestant.

From a socio-economic perspective, the World Bank (2016) estimates that almost 30% of the population currently lives in poverty. These people are living on less than $2.50 per day under the revised poverty line (Handelman, 2013). According to the World Bank (2015), El Salvador ranks the 103rd nation in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) table. Handelman (2013) explains that GDP is a measure of per capita income and the lower a country's GDP the increased likeliness of poverty (p. 4). Similarly, the United

Nations (2016) ranks El Salvador 116th in the Human Development Index (HDI) table. Handelman (2013) again explains, "development specialists consider the HDI to be the best single measure of a nation's quality of life" (p. 10). Combined, the GDP and HDI charts demonstrate the socioeconomic struggles faced by the majority of the Salvadorian population.

The El Salvadorian national debt has also continuously been climbing and the state is under significant financial stress (West, 2016). This adds to the suffering of a nation with a low Gross National Income (GNI). Handelman (2013) shares some characteristics of nations with a low GNI including "highly unequal income distribution, poor infrastructure (including communications and transportation), limited use of modern technology, and low consumption of energy" (p. 4). Handelman (2013) further explains how all of the above circumstances result in "wide-spread scarcity, substantial unemployment, substandard housing, poor health conditions, and inadequate nutrition" (p. 4).

Violence. In addition to these economic challenges, El Salvador is still suffering from a legacy of violence that stems from the country's civil war from 1980-1992 (Seelke, 2016). This war left 75,000 people dead and over 1 million people displaced (Allison, 2010; André & Mandigo, 2013). This history of violence extends through to the modern day with El Salvador listed as the deadliest country on the planet (outside any war zone) in 2015, at 104 homicides per 100,000 people (Seelke, 2016).

Today, this violence is manifested through a combination of internal gang conflict and hard state policing (Markham, 2016). In the past few years, homicides have surged

and increased by 70% in 2015, having previously been much lower due to a truce between the gangs in 2012 and 2013 (Katz, Hedberg, & Amaya, 2016; Seelke, 2016). More recently, in 2017, the month of September became Salvador's deadliest month with a total of 435 homicides – almost 15 per day (Ávalos, 2017). Putting this in perspective, El Salvador is a similar size to the U.S. state of New Jersey with less than 14% of the total population of Central America, however it accounts for over 35% of the homicides in the region (Markham, 2016).

Of all the Central America nations, Seelke (2016) writes, "El Salvador has the highest concentration of gang members per capita" (p. 7). These gangs are predominantly male dominated and of the crimes reported to Salvadorian police, 40% of murders and 70% of extortions are committed by the gangs (World Bank, 2011; Santos, 2013; Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, & Vorobyeva, 2017). Other illegal revenue streams include small-time drug dealing, guns sales and prostitution (Martínez, Lemus, Martínez, & Sontag, 2016).

It is argued that such violence is fueled by ineffective militaristic state policing where officers are given the power of law to interrogate any person they may suspect of being in a gang. Additionally, rumors of police death squads on the streets combined with the government enforced zero-tolerance policy on youth crime, most cases made against police – for police brutality or even wrongful killing – are met with impunity (Ávalos, 2017; Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, & Vorobyeva, 2017). For example, in 2016 the attorney general for Salvadorian human rights had 31 open cases against police for alleged "summary executions" of 100 gang members over the previous year and a half (Martínez, Lemus, Martínez, & Sontag, 2016).

This violence poses an on-going threat to the safety of young people throughout the country (World Bank, 2011; Salas-Wright, Olate, Vaughn, & Tran, 2013). Martínez (2014) states, "According to El Salvador's Institute of Legal Medicine, 38% of those murdered in the country every year are between the ages of 15 and 24 (p. 13). This equates to a rate of 92.3 homicides per 100,000 youth, approximately three times higher than the national homicide rate for Salvadorian adults (Mandigo, Corlett, & Ticas, 2016). Gang recruitment is dependent on young people and in recent years the recruitment age average has dropped from 14 to 12 years with some gangs recruiting children as young as eight or nine (Martínez, 2014). This threat, particularly to young people, is a result of multiple social challenges including the civil war, poverty and inequality spanning decades and family disintegration (Seelke, 2016).

The on-going cycle of gang membership can be understood as a reaction or rebellion against a failing world plagued by inequality (Salas, 1997). Inequality, characterized by poverty, a lack of education and poor employment opportunities are all associated with gang membership (Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, & Vorobyeva, 2017). Family disintegration in particular is a consequence of such social conditions, and this especially becomes a key ingredient in the recruitment of young people into the gangs (Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, & Vorobyeva, 2017). The gangs offer an identity for young people and a sense of belonging and community that is desperately sought after by impressionable youth whom possess few, if any, positive role models within a safe family structure (Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, & Vorobyeva, 2017; Markham, 2017).

It is of great importance to recognize the difficulties that gang members face who wish to try and leave the gang life behind. However, merely having this desire to leave the gang is not enough and members are faced with multiple challenges even if they are able to escape the gang lifestyle alive (Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, & Vorobyeva, 2017). Part of the problem is explained by, "no rehabilitation centers where they [former gang members] can seek refuge, no programs to reintegrate them into society and no gang-prevention initiatives" (Martínez, Lemus, Martínez, & Sontag, 2016, "Failure of the 'Iron Fist'," para. 14). Evidently, one of the biggest challenges faced by El Salvador is to find a sustainable solution to this youth violence (Mandigo, Corlett, & Ticas, 2016). In order to achieve this, it is important to develop a greater appreciation for Salvador's violent history and dig deeper into its political past.

U. S. relations. At this stage, it is important to recognize some of the contributing factors for El Salvador's troubles with violence. The challenges faced by this country have not come without any external imperialist intervention that has had lasting impacts. A controversial report from the UN revealed that the U.S. government was largely responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people in Central America for their covert role in manipulating the political structure in these countries (Teeple, 2005). It is therefore important to consider the involvement of the U. S. in the Salvadorian civil war from 1980-1992. At the time of the conflict, the right-wing Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) party was the political group in charge of the decaying state, given the gross inequality and conflict that spawned from such conditions. It was this party that was so heavily backed by the U.S. government at the time – chiefly the Reagan

administration from 1981-1989 – that offered militaristic support and training to the Salvadorian army in response to the growing guerilla movement protesting the gross inequality throughout the country (Perla, 2008).

Specifically, it has been shown how the U.S. trained Salvadorian soldiers in certain tactical warfare that involved torturing. The effects of this training are very clear with the overwhelming amount of evidence stacked against the Salvadorian army that demonstrates the brutality of their actions in order to try to suppress that advances of the guerrilla fighters – led by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) group (Perla, 2008). A UN report also reveals the severity of these crimes that includes the unlawful killing of thousands of innocent people and the inhumane actions of the military "Death Squads" that inflicted such unforgiving fatalities. It was the U.S. that not only offered this type of training to the guilty Salvadorian soldiers, but also supplied the Salvadorian army with arms to continue fighting this social uprising, resulting in over a decade of conflict (Perla, 2008).

Today, the U. S. is home to more than 1.9 million Salvadorian migrants with approximately 700,000 estimated to be unauthorized (Seelke, 2016). It is important to note how during the civil war era, almost one million people managed to flee the country to try and escape the conflict and consequently travelled North to seek relative safety in the U. S. (World Bank, 2011). It was here, in the U.S. specifically Los Angeles, that disenfranchised youth – many of whom escaped the clutches of war in their home country – that gangs were born (World Bank, 2011; Martínez, 2014; Markham, 2017). Over the years to follow, gang culture would grow from the catalytic "Zoot Suit Riots" and

continue to prosper, nourished by the unforgiving poverty and inequality on the streets of Los Angeles. In response to the growing safety issues to this gang violence, the U.S. government acted by deporting thousands of undocumented gang members back to El Salvador (Seelke, 2016; Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, & Vorobyeva, 2017).

This contextual description of El Salvador unearths some pivotal issues including violence, poverty and social inequality that have deep historical, social and political roots. It is evident this nation's woes are a result of a complex system of structural factors that transcend multiple decades and generations of people. Given the nation's current status as a developing country, El Salvador is a popular site for multiple developmental organizations to operate. This chapter concludes by revisiting El Salvador with a synopsis of the recent SDP efforts in this country that have been documented. However, before reaching this point it is important now to turn towards the theoretical underpinnings of international development work and SDP.

The Symbiotic Relationship Between International Development and SDP

Scholarship in the field of SDP has called for a greater synthesis with the far more expansive research conducted in the broader scope of international development (Darnell & Black, 2011). However, before beginning to address this point, it is important to offer a brief definition of international development. Generally speaking, the purpose of international development concerns the improvement of the human condition (Currie-Alder, Kanbur, Malone, & Medhora, 2014; Rebien, 1996). Rebien (1996) further characterizes this as, "a social intervention measure, whether it be aid to a particular project, a sector in a given country or an entire programme covering several sectors" (p.

2). These are both intentional and deliberate attempts to alleviate and introduce development to a recipient whether this be public, private or a group of individuals (Rebien, 1996). Elsewhere the broader goals of international development are related to deliberate efforts to transform societies by way of achieving predetermined sets of developmental objectives (Brown & Hanlin, 2013). Furthermore, these targets can be narrowly designed to improve those that are typically the poorest in society (Brown & Hanlin, 2013).

It is important to recognize how SDP fits under this umbrella of international development. Presently, there is a significant gap between the two bodies of research despite the seemingly obvious relationships between them (Lindsey, 2017). It is important for the SDP movement to benefit from the research available within the international development community by better understanding some of the foundational developmental theories, challenges and successes in the field (Darnell, 2013). In an attempt to bridge this gap, this section will present some of the key theories to have evolved over time in international development and situate these within a macro understanding of developmental history. In addition, this section will highlight some of the popular critiques of the wider international development community. Some of these fundamental critiques are centered upon the integration of human rights and how this universal notion has been implicated within sports. This grounding will then offer the opportunity to draw parallels with the existing critiques of the SDP movement as it stands today.

Development Theory

The term "development" is a polyvocal label possessing an air of ambiguity and no clear definition (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). The fact that many different people struggle to conceptualize the term across a wide variety of disciplines is a testament and accurate reflection to the challenge of its application (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). This term is well understood to be heavily contested across multiple disciplines (Brown & Hanlin, 2013). However, a major area of study in which developmental theory is examined and explored is in the social sciences and international development (Pieterse, 2010). The first task here then is to construct a clear definition of the term "development" to be understood throughout this research.

First, it is key to place development within the context of seeking to improve the conditions of a space or environment. McCowan and Unterhalter (2015) write, "The term 'development' when applied to countries or societies refers to a process of change over time – usually a positive change" (p. 3). However, Pieterse (2010) reminds us, "What constitutes improvement and what is appropriate intervention obviously vary according to class, culture, historical context and relations of power" (p. 3). It can be assumed a target population for development is therefore an area that is considered a social majority state. These majority states all endure some form of social, political or economic hardship (Handelman, 2013).

What follows is a brief synopsis and introduction of the key developmental theories spanning the boom in international development in the middle of the 20th century to the present day. These theories have provided the foundational roots of developmental

trends over time. Within each strand of developmental thought, it is important to recognize the political, social and economic factors at play, each having a profound impact on the implications of development efforts at the time.

Modernization theory. The concept of international development emerged shortly after World War II (Darnell, 2009). President Harry Truman of the United States addressed the world with a message that would spark the international development movement (Millington, 2015). Darnell (2009) describes Truman's message as an urge for developed nations, "to commit to increasing opportunities for the production and prosperity among the world's poor" (p. 11). Truman believed it was the responsibility of these developed nations to impart global projects to tackle the challenges presented by poverty around the world (Darnell, 2009). This notion sparked a modernist paradigm to international developmental thought.

The basic tenants of modernization theory suggest a universal ideological path that all nations must progress through (Millington, 2015). This direction was rooted in the progression of political and social structures by way of state economic growth (Nederveen-Pieterse, 2010). Darnell (2009) further explains how this modernist approach to development contained three main components,

> An essentialist view of the 'developing world' and its members as a homogenous group, 2) an unyielding belief in progress and the modernization of society, and 3) the centrality of the nation-state as a focal point and lead participant in the development process. (p. 11)

Modernized developmentalism of this nature carried forth an agenda of economic liberalization and free trade as the means to transform social majority nations. In an attempt to reach the same status and economic freedoms as the social minority states, this model proposed linear growth and sociopolitical improvement. However, these types of developmental initiatives led by social minority organizations typically failed. Not only did these campaigns fail, in many cases social marginalization and the geopolitical divide increased in many of the social majority states (Darnell, 2013).

At its core, modernization theory assumed the conditions of underdevelopment to be ahistorical and overlooked the historical factors that contributed to a nation's underdeveloped status (Darnell, 2013). This limited perspective suggested that issues of underdevelopment were born out of primitive internal structural deficiencies, culturally inherent to a particular social majority nation or community (Handelman, 2013; Millington, 2015). In other words, it was the state's fault for the hardships they faced, and it was the moral obligation of the social minority power nations to save them of their struggles by way of modernization.

It should be of no surprise then how this initial form of developmental action drew significant critiques from critical scholars around the world. Modernizing developmentalism was eventually characterized as a paternalistic doctrine grounded by Westernized neo-colonial ideology (Handelman, 2013). However, it is this theory that dominated international development efforts throughout the second half of the 20th century and in some areas is still largely prominent today (Darnell, 2009; Millington, 2015).

Dependency and world systems theory. Amidst the failings of modernized developmentalism and with the influence of Marxist thought, dependency and world systems theories emerged as a response to the modernist paradigm (Darnell, 2009; Darnell, 2013; Millington, 2015). As mentioned above, modernist approaches to development stratified the inequality gap between the richest and the poorest in social majority societies (Darnell, 2009). Additionally, these approaches fostered a deficit-approach to developmental action, further implanting a systematic and internal dependency on external intervention by way of transformation. Dependency and world systems theories therefore rose as a counter-hegemonic perspective that directly confronted the modernist paradigm (Nederveen-Pieterse, 2010).

Dependency theory fundamentally maintains that underdevelopment is a product of historical exploitation of land, people and resources, stemming from an oppressive history of colonialization (Nederveen-Pieterse, 2010). Through dependency theory, developmental action consists of deconstructing structural systems of power and inequality (McCowan, 2015). In other words, dependency theory seeks to remove the veil of historical exploitation by way of colonial and neo-colonial force. While dependency theory was presenting resistance to the modernizing approaches of the world's social minority development initiatives, it failed to give rise to any significant alternatives to developmental action. As a result, this resistance simply resulted in a temporary cul-de-sac of developmental action (Payne, 2005).

Neoliberal development. Having initially been met with resistance from scholars espousing dependency and world systems theories, the international development

movement reinvented itself once more (Darnell, 2013). Building on the early tenants of modernization theory, a new approach to international development emerged in the 1980's and 1990's that blossomed under the advance of neoliberalism (Millington, 2015). Neoliberalism would ultimately underpin the rebirth of international development and propel this second wave of developmental thinking that dominates international development today (Darnell, 2013).

Fundamentally, neoliberal ideology is rooted in the idea that economic and market freedoms offer the primary means of social progression and transformation for social majority nations (Harvey, 2011; Marois & Pradella, 2015). This movement proposed the eradication of global poverty and suffering by advocating for decreased state intervention systems and instead, increased market freedoms embedded within a global economy (Darnell, 2013; Marois & Pradella, 2015). Additionally, the neoliberal agenda helped to reinvigorate individualization and celebrated individual difference that was once supported by industrial capitalism in the early 20th century (Marks, 1982). This new social order would result in a form of cultural imperialism that manifests itself in developmental enterprises around the world (Arnove, 1982).

This tidal wave of neoliberalism was fueled by social minority leaders such as Ronald Raegan and Margaret Thatcher. Their respective political parties boldened and empowered global institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, in becoming self-proclaimed leaders in global development advancements (Darnell, 2013; Marois & Pradella, 2015). However, much like the original attempts of social minority leaders to modernize the world, neoliberal-infused development

devastated many social majority states (Darnell, 2013). To better understand this, it is important to recognize how the neoliberal developmental doctrine is intimately related to the concept of universal human rights.

Although the idea of universal human rights was first introduced shortly after the Second World War, it is crucial to appreciate how these rights were similarly reborn through a neoliberal ideology. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) first served as a symbolic catalyst for international development organizations that were closely aligning themselves with the United Nations manifesto of humanitarian rights (Higgs, 2012; Teeple, 2005). A closer examination of the introductory segment of this document reads:

> The General Assembly, proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the people of Member States themselves and among the people of territories under their jurisdiction (United Nations, 1948, p. 1-2).

While these rights are often heralded as revolutionary among the social minority leaders, it is important to undertake a critical analysis of how these human rights have been interpreted, repackaged and implemented, in the realm of international development.

A critical perspective of neoliberal ideology allows a deconstruction of the contradictory limitations of the human rights promise. First, human rights will remain an illusionary concept to the social majority until they possess the means to actually achieve these promised rights. This directly concerns the ability to live in an environment where these rights can be realized (Teeple, 2005). For example, in a nation that suffers from homelessness, people may have a constitutional right to housing, however they do not have the material means to afford a house (Ferguson, 2015). The second limitation is that not all people are socially qualified as possessors of rights if they are positioned on the margins of society – for example, indigenous people or groups (Teeple, 2005; Darnell, 2013).

In addition, it is vital to situate the publishing of the UDHR at a time when capitalism and capitalist nations (predominantly among social minority states), were tied in a battle to counter the socialist ideology spreading throughout the Eastern block of Russian-led communism in South America (Teeple, 2005). Since its inception, the flag of human rights has symbiotically been associated with U.S. foreign policy, as Teeple (2005) iterates, "it has been used to rationalize U.S. activities around the world in opposing the threat of socialism" (p. 27). Therefore, it is essential to recognize the birth of the UDHR is not so much centered upon idealized values of humanitarian dignity and well-being, as much as it is a statement against political leaders who dare advance their socialist ideas over capitalist-led economic freedoms rooted in neoliberalism (Teeple, 2005).

A critical viewing of neoliberalism also helps to deconstruct Western metanarratives and critique the universalized ideas implicit within a Euro-centric view of history (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). In this light, it is clear to see how human rights have been born out of a capitalist ideology, reflecting the values of a market driven system and championing the freedom of economic democracy as a mandate for global civil society (Darnell, 2013). This structure consequently catapulted the formation and formidable growth of economic superpowers – World Bank, IMF and the World Trade Organization – (Teeple, 2005). Together these organizations facilitated the reconstruction of capitalism that ultimately led to the economic exploitation of the social majority world (Teeple, 2005).

It is these international organizations that catapulted neo-liberal development, emerging as the second wave of international development after the modernization and dependency movements (Darnell, 2009). By supporting multi-national free-trade agreements, the neo-liberal promise was that suffering people would be elevated out of poverty by empowering free-trade across a global-economy, freeing economic prosperity from the vices of the state and liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms (Darnell, 2009; Harvey, 2011). Arguably, this tidal wave of neo-liberalism washed away opportunities of self-reliant and sustainable systems in favor of leaving behind further economic disparity and dependency among social majority states (Darnell, 2009).

Post-development/post-modern theory. As critical consciousness steadily grew around the neo-liberal development agenda, the post-development perspective emerged as a branch of postmodern thought (Darnell, 2009). This era saw a clash in the

development world between cultural relativists and modernist universalists (Darnell, 2009). Cultural relativists advocated the necessity to recognize diversity and difference among social majority states and stood against the notion of universal attempts of developmentalism. However, it is the belief of universalist thinkers (characterized by modernization and neoliberal theories) that developmental programs should be orchestrated and designed around an interconnected value system of a "one-world" ideology (Esteva, Prakash, & Shiva, 2014).

Born out of a neoliberal agenda, developmental programming of this nature advocates for a universalized notion of global thinking and champions the individualized self by way of transformation (Esteva, Prakash, & Shiva, 2014). It is crucial to appreciate how this is a belief orchestrated by the few and imposed upon the many without regard for traditional cultural beliefs or values (Esteva, Prakash, & Shiva, 2014). Further, this universalized system not only engenders greater inequality and marginalization but serves to erase the cultural norms and beliefs of civilizations that existed (and co-existed), long before the establishment of the modern world (Darnell, 2009; Esteva, Prakash, & Shiva, 2014).

Further post-development theorists recognized the reproduction of Eurocentric discourse and knowledge across social majority populations (Darnell, 2013). Such an advancement enforced the construction and maintenance of hegemonic powers that reflected dominant global thinking, trickled down from the social minority elites (Darnell, 2013). Increasing opposition to this global order has spurned a backlash against neoliberal developmentalism, however this form of developmental action is still largely

dominating the world today. SDP ultimately finds itself perched on the cusp of this paradigmatic epoch.

This historical exploration of the international development movement has served two major purposes for the following section of this chapter. First, by offering an introductory view of the major developmental paradigms – modernization, dependency and world systems, neo-liberal and post-development theories – it is possible to accurately situate the introduction of the SDP movement within broader developmental discourse. Second, this exploration of the major developmental paradigms offers an insight into the pivotal critiques aimed at these theories. These critiques are key to take forwards in the next section that seeks to understand how these are similarly manifest in the SDP movement.

Sport for Development and Peace (SDP)

The first chapter of this study introduced the history and background of SDP, recognized as a legitimate developmental movement with the United Nation's formation of the Office of Sport for Development and Peace in 2001. This office was subsequently followed by the birth of the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) in 2002 (Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2016). It should not be surprising that most SDP initiatives spawning at this time based their programs around the MDG's (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2015). It is therefore plausible to align the inception of the SDP movement within the wider political, economic and social fabric of neoliberalism (Darnell, 2013). It is within this discourse that some of the major critiques of SDP are based today (Mwaanga & Prince, 2016; Rossi & Jeanes, 2016; Spaaij, Oxford, & Jeanes, 2016).

Fundamentally, it is crucial to recognize how there is limited empirical evidence that actually validates the use of sport participation in achieving purported developmental goals (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Kaufman, Rosenbauer, & Moore, 2015; Mwaanga & Prince, 2016; Spaaij, Oxford, & Jeanes, 2016; Svensson, Hancock, & Hums, 2016; Wright, Jacobs, Ressler, & Jung, 2016). These authors highlight the ineffectiveness of SDP programming and call to question the unchallenged belief that sport is a meaningful developmental tool (Coalter, 2013). This central critique of the SDP movement concerns the inability for traditional models of SDP programming to target and address some of the root causes of developmental issues (Darnell, 2010; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011).

It is this current state of SDP that criticism has targeted doubts over the justification of using sport as a vehicle for developmental action. Consequently, this has led to conclusions that SDP is poorly positioned and ill-equipped to tackle imposing social issues (Coalter, 2013). Coalter (2013) describes this misalignment as a "displacement of scope" referring to, "the process of wrongly generalizing micro-level effects to the macro" (p. 19). There is a significant danger to these idealized claims by sporting evangelists around the globe that are making grandiose statements about the power of sport to impact meaningful change (Colater, 2013). As such, a mythopoeic veil has masked the SDP movement with little empirical evidence to support such claims of its power (Coalter, 2010).

In order to better understand the critiques against the application of sport as a developmental tool, some scholars have applied different critical theoretical lenses to examine the SDP movement. What follows is a blend of theoretical analyses that dig

deeper beyond the surface of these fundamental criticisms. First, this section explores the imperialist and neocolonial stigma that is attached to the SDP movement. Additionally, a critical feminist perspective highlights the patriarchal and paternalistic footprint often being reinforced by SDP programs within social majority communities. Today, a majority of these critiques are centered upon the neoliberal discourse that drives the highly individualistic and egalitarian sporting fundamentalism behind SDP. Therefore, a significant space in this section is devoted to identifying and exploring these critiques. This is followed by an inspection of post-colonial and post-development perspectives across the SDP literature that advocate strong arguments for a move towards more critically focused and transformative programming. Crucially, these analyses help to demonstrate these critiques in action at a variety of SDP sites around the world. Together, this synthesis will provide a rich literary context upon which this study has been formulated.

Imperial foundations. The universality of sport is often celebrated by social minority nations as a cross-cultural language, transcending boundaries of race, religion, gender and culture (Gilbert & Bennett, 2012). It is this essentialist notion of the power of sport that has latched itself on to the universal belief of human rights (Coalter, 2013; Darnell, 2013). However, it is important to remember that sport is neither ahistorical nor apolitical as is often presented (Millington, 2015). As such, sport has deep-rooted implications in history particularly in nations ruled by colonial governance (Darnell, 2009). In this light, the SDP movement can be strongly critiqued as a continuation of

Western imperialism and neo-colonial rule (Giulianotti, 2011; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Tiessen, 2011).

Before exploring some of the ways in which a post-colonial/neo-colonial lens can be applied to SDP, it is important to offer a brief definition of this theoretical lens. First, when describing colonization, Mohanty (1988) explains it, "invariably implies a relation of structural domination, and a discursive or political suppression of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question" (p. 61). Stemming from the sociopolitical, cultural and economic impact of European domination, the purpose of a post-colonial/neo-colonial lens is to analyze how race, class, sexuality and nation interact to form social institutions and theorize the historically situated ideology that is reinforced by interlocking power relations (Hayhurst, 2011). The following section will apply a post-colonial/neo-colonial lens to flesh out some of the major critiques of SDP.

A post-colonial/neo-colonial critique argues that SDP and larger developmental enterprises carry forth institutionalized forms of imperialistic and oppressive power, immersed in Eurocentric discourses (Darnell & Kaur, 2015; Hayhurst, 2011). Darnell and Hayhurst (2015) stress the importance in recognizing how sports participation in many majority world countries is a direct legacy of European colonialization, e.g. soccer in Africa and cricket in multiple commonwealth nations (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2015). Darnell and Hayhurst (2015) further share the example of an SDP program in Burundi, Africa that fails to acknowledge the bloody history of ethnic conflict in this nation, which is ultimately inseparable from the legacy of colonial intervention and stewardship (p. 37).

This imperialist doctrine is most visible across SDP programs by way of organizational structure and leadership. This is represented through hierarchal governance, that is undemocratic, and offers minimal inclusion to social majority groups or representatives (Mwaanga & Prince, 2016). The planning, design and implementation of SDP programming is typically a centralized process, offering little to no agency to those for whom the program is supposedly designed. In rare cases, local governance is sometimes offered limited decision-making abilities, however these are often mere tokenistic gestures of autonomy. This predominantly results in SDP programs that essentially silence social majority groups, who have minimal control or impact over the developmental programming that has been created and oftentimes forced upon them (Mwaanga & Prince, 2016).

From a curriculum and programming perspective, many SDP organizations of the neo-colonial nature, adopt a universalized approach to development. This method decontextualizes the political, economic, and social fabric of localized communities (Mwaanga & Prince, 2016). Instead of seeking to understand the historically interconnected, social, political, and economic nuanced complexities of a social majority state, SDP programs often adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to development (Svensson, Hancock, & Hums, 2016). In their literature review of SDP organizations, Webb and Richelieu (2015) concluded that this type of one-size-fits-all approach, hinders the impact of SDP programming as it fundamentally fails to take into consideration the local context (p. 292).

On the ground level, this form of neo-colonialism is evidenced in some SDP programs through the imposition of imperialist values, norms and traditions (Levermore & Beacom, 2009). Darenll and Hayhurst (2015) offer a prime example of this imposition by way of language. Given that most SDP organizations are born from European and North American states, the dominant language in which SDP is orchestrated and conducted is in English. There is minimal expectation for SDP practitioners to learn the local language when delivering SDP projects, rather, it is the local participants themselves who are assumed to understand English. This linguistic insistence and rigid feature of SDP plays a vital role in the erasure of local contexts. In a similar vein, Darnell and Hayhurst (2015) also warn of the vernacular "lin-guicide" seldom discussed as a by-product of social science research in non-English speaking social majority states (p. 50).

A further tenant of the neo-colonial critique posits SDP programs as paternalistic doctrines that engender a deficit-based approach to development (Sanders, 2016). In their research on an SDP program working with Aboriginal populations, Coleby and Giles (2013) found that non-Aboriginal sources reinforced deficit discourses about participants. The authors found that the first dominant discourse determined that Aboriginal youth possessed no hope for social wellness and are prone to suicide (p. 45). The second discourse revealed the assumption that non-Aboriginal people were the sole saviors and Aboriginal people had no credit for their role in the SDP program (p. 46). These deficit-based discourses are both damaging and harmful as they perpetuate an assumption of dependency for Aboriginal people on their non-Aboriginal neighbors.

Elsewhere, research by Tiessen (2011) found further evidence of this deficit approach in SDP and concluded that SDP programs have the potential to reinforce "Othering" of social majority communities and states. Tiessen (2011) revealed that dominant discourse in SDP material consistently conceptualized social majority states as disadvantaged and in need of rescue from the social minority leaders of the world (p. 579). For example, Tiessen (2011) explained that online materials often presented paternalistic narratives of children often demonstrating an ill-conceived message that social majority states are comprised exclusively of children largely dependent on the help that only the social minority can provide (p. 580).

Tiessen (2011) also acknowledged the highly racialized undertones of some SDP rhetoric that covertly insinuated the power of the white man to rescue "Others" from their degradation (p. 581). This ties with the previously mentioned dominant Eurocentric discourse often found in SDP programming that privileges "Whiteness" and dominant Christian values in a hierarchal fashion, deeming anyone or anything considered "non-White" as inferior (Nicholls, 2009). Together these findings reveal how the fangs of neo-colonial discourse are insidiously embedded within SDP from organizational structure to micro-level discourse. These examples offer a valid demonstration of the imperialist tendencies still present in SDP today.

Patriarchal undertones. Extending beyond the neo-colonial critiques outlined thus far, an added layer of a critical feminist theory posits traditional SDP programming as sites that perpetuate patriarchal ideologies, further enhancing gender inequality and heteronormative sexuality (Carney & Chawansky, 2016). Additionally, such

programming simply fails to recognize the traditional Eurocentric roots of sports and how they can serve to produce and reproduce oppressive gender norms (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2014; Hayhurst, 2011). Sports, as a mirror to society, reflect a form of "soft-essentialism" that is key to understanding hegemonic gender ideology perpetuated through sports (Messner, 2011).

Once more, before delving further into these overarching critiques, it is important to offer a brief description of critical feminist theory, and why its application is particularly telling in SDP. At its core, critical feminist theory is concerned with fighting against multiple forms of inequity and oppression (De Saxe, 2016). However, the core of critical feminist theories was born out gender inequality and the suffering of females as a result of their societal devaluation and exploitation (De Saxe, 2016). Without universalizing the key components of critical feminist theory, it is crucial to recognize how this theory assumes the intersectionality of inequality, and is employed as a means of deconstructing these layers (De Saxe, 2016). The next section attempts to draw connections between feminist theory and its application in critically analyzing SDP.

The first major example stems from research conducted by Jeanes and Magee (2014), who present the ways in which gender norms were being established and reinforced in an SDP program designed to empower female participants in Zambia, Africa. The primary focus of this study was to examine the impact of SDP programming from the perspectives of the program participants themselves. From their analysis, they found a deep-rooted gendered history stemming from the imposition of Victorian values from British colonial troops (p. 138). This historical context is important to understand in

developing a holistic appreciation of the gender and sport construct and how these power relations are interconnected in maintaining oppressive relations. Oftentimes, nations that have a colonial past will continue to perpetuate unequal gender relations, yet it is vital to consider the role of historically dominant Eurocentric discourse in this analysis (Hayhurst, 2011).

While many SDP programs may be well-intentioned, often the program organizers lack the cultural appreciation and knowledge of gender laws and customs in certain social majority states (Hayhurst, 2011). This carelessness can prove to have devastating consequences for female participants in particular, when practitioners are unaware of the dangerous realities the participants may face as part of their lived realities. Jeanes and Magee (2014) provide further examples of this once again in their analysis of the SDP program in Zambia. The authors found that participants faced a constant struggle with their culture, since it was forbidden for females to participate in sport. Female participants talked about the constant battle of regular participation in sport and trying to demonstrate dominant gender ideologies away from the sports field. This presented a genuine risk to their safety when returning home to their communities (Jeanes & Magee, 2014). Participants were often accused of being shameful, disrespectful, and having their sexual orientation openly challenged by members of the community (pp. 144-145). This placed the program participants in a vulnerable position about which the SDP program organizers are typically unaware.

While it is not the intention of this section to downplay the role of SDP programming that seeks to challenge oppressive gender ideologies, it is absolutely

imperative to critically examine the term “empowerment” and its application in SDP (Hayhurst, 2011). Chawansky (2011) supports this need, stressing that in their attempts to liberate females from the shackles of unequal treatment, SDP programs themselves often obscure the understanding of gender as a relational identity. Similar findings were discussed by Forde and Frisby (2015) who analyzed the representations of gender in an SDP manual designed to support females against HIV/AIDS. Forde and Frisby (2015) found that gender relations were aligned with hegemonic conceptions of family unit and assumed heterosexual partnerships (p. 7). Such subtle yet powerful inferences reinforce a dominant heteronormative identity, encouraging passivity and discouraging resistance against deep-rooted political disdain for non-traditional gender roles (Carney & Chawansky, 2016).

Comparable trends were found by Carney and Chawansky (2016), whose research focused on reviewing SDP academic literature and drawing upon personal work and research experiences in the field. The authors found that the research base in SDP generally evades nuanced discussions of sexuality and instead focuses its monitoring and evaluation efforts within the boundaries of heteronormative rules (p. 291). This study concluded with a clear absence in SDP literature accounting for queer sexualities and it could be that traditional quantitative monitoring and evaluation techniques contribute to this absence of story-telling for participants (pp. 294-295). This silence and failure to recognize the voice of multiple genders and sexual orientations serves as another strand in how the SDP movement maintains a system of patriarchy and dominant ideology of heteronormative sexuality.

Elsewhere, research conducted by Hayhurst, Giles and Wright (2016), offers an alternative perspective through their participatory action research with an SDP program that focused on indigenous young women. The authors found this programming was designed to better equip these women for a competitive capitalist world, focusing on Eurocentric employment, post-secondary education and healthy active living by way of transformation. The authors commented on the hidden challenges for the indigenous women to succeed due to the insensitivity of the SDP program practitioners to the sociopolitical factors that maintain the structural inequalities these women face in a Eurocentric society (p. 564). The authors concluded that in order to increase the likeliness of success in a program like this it must be led by indigenous people themselves, who better understand the realities of the difficulties they face and can better navigate the broader systemic inequalities of their world (p. 565).

This range of studies suggest that it is imperative to continually challenge the dominant ideas that sports can serve as a vehicle to empower female participants and marginalized groups. These assumptions fundamentally negate the colonial roots of sport participation, further perpetuating dehumanizing gender norms and inequalities. Such programming not only limits opportunities for women to break from these oppressive shackles, but in some instances can further cement women's positioning as second-class citizens and subordinates to dominant male groups.

Advancing neoliberalism. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one of the major fundamental critiques of the SDP movement today is centered upon a broader neoliberal agenda being advanced by the international development community. Specific

to SDP, these critiques target the inability for programs to purposefully identify, target and change the deep-rooted causes of underdevelopment despite the transformational abilities these programs purport. Rather than seeking to address some of these structural issues, the majority of SDP programs ostensibly perpetuate neoliberal logic that champions individualized behavioral transformation, resulting in upward-mobility yet makes no impact in challenging the structural inequalities at play (Darnell, 2010; Darnell, 2013). Here Darnell (2013) elaborates:

> The dominant ideology of SDP attempts (with some notable exceptions) to improve the welfare of 'Others' within the structures of merit-based achievement, or liberal egalitarianism, an orientation that in turn supports the current culture of sport and political economy development. (p. 42)

Before exploring how neoliberal ideology is manifested on the ground level, it is important to understand how the free-market politics of neoliberalism has a direct impact on SDP organizations. For example, Giulianotti and Armstong (2015) explain how NGO's openly compete against one another for contracts within SDP awarded by large donors. This corporate structure creates a competitive marketplace based on the severity of the cases they present (Kidd, 2011). The issue evolves as SDP programs seek to address basic human needs that are typically awarded while often failing to address the more fundamental causes of such problems in the first place (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2015). In this way, it is the programs that offer more of an immediate relief to development concerns that are prioritized. This funding dynamic limits the opportunities

for programs that might be engaged in any long-term development work that may actually have an impact on some of the core issues of inequality and injustice.

When looking closely at the structure and delivery of SDP program curricula, it is possible to draw connections between the key messages being delivered by the program and some of the core principles of neoliberalism (Forde, 2014). Essentially, these principles are related to SDP programming that normalize self-reliance and individualism by way of social transformation under the guise of universal global citizenship (Tiessen, 2011). Mwaanga and Prince (2016) explain, "Responsibility for learning is placed on the individual who is expected to achieve their own goals over group goals" (p. 593). However, this perspective not only imposes a divisive mentality that seeks to separate individuals from their communities, this isolation can result to self-blame if no actual change occurs (Mwaanga & Prince, 2016). Ultimately, this emphasis on self-interest serves as a toxin that poisons the communal nature of many social majority cultures.

This is particularly damaging to social majority populations whose cultural norms are rooted in the ideas and values of community. In their theoretical study of liberation pedagogy embedded within SDP, Mwaanga and Prince (2016) highlight how the belief system of the Ubuntu cultural philosophy might better serve SDP programming. The Ubuntu philosophy is almost the exact opposite to the highly individualized and neo-liberal logic as it is firmly based on the non-individualistic core values of respect, compassion and understanding as the cornerstone of community (Lutz, 2009). However, these types of values and beliefs are overlooked by the majority of SDP organizations from social minority states (Mwaange & Prince, 2016).

These messages of independence and self-reliance are usually catered to by programming that seeks to train and develop individuals for the job market. Neoliberal SDP programming of this nature were evidenced by Manzo (2012) who investigated FIFA's Football for Hope project. Manzo's study revealed how the project was implemented across several African states in an attempt to combine soccer facilities with social development hubs that focused on training social entrepreneurs and local businessmen (p. 554). This type of SDP programming is typically representative of curriculum that is designed to train participants with skills to increase their employability and enhance their chances of securing a job to alleviate them of their issues. This type of programming is commonly branded as "life skill" training and is criticized for its conformist approach to perpetuating a neoliberal system (Forde, 2014). Programming of this kind neglects any form of critical thinking that seeks to deconstruct the invisible tentacles of neoliberal ideology.

Elsewhere, in their study of SDP programming in the Carribean, Kaufman, Rosenbauer and Moore (2015) reveal how a variety of curricula was similarly focused on the development of "soft employability skills" for youth participants (p. 178). For example, in one particular program youth would participate in classroom based activities that delivered sport-themed lessons in mathematics, language and computer technology. This finding speaks to the job-related training that is commonly featured in SDP programs focused on setting young people up for future employment. From a critical perspective though, this form of training again fails to challenge some of the deep-rooted and systemic issues at play. Instead, the focus is primarily on preparing individuals to

submit to the dominant neoliberal social order of equipping oneself to upwardly climb out of poverty and into the free market.

It is crucial to consider how this type of programming and curriculum design perpetuates a culture of acceptance and tolerance to a failing social system. Once more, Kaufman, Rosenbauer and Moore (2015) identify another SDP program that claims to use soccer as a vehicle to, "inspire and mobilize communities to stop the spread of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa" (p. 179). In practical terms, this program would use failed attempts at soccer-related drills to punish participants and relate their technical mistakes with similar erroneous judgements that can be made when it comes to HIV (e.g. unprotected sex, multiple partners, drugs and alcohol etc.). While these teaching attempts may have the best interests of the participants at heart, this behaviorist programming is further embedding a mindset that is numb to challenging the structural inequalities present in any oppressive social majority state. Rather than encouraging participants to actively question and resist the broader macro structures that fuel the spread of HIV, these programs foster an environment of "self-help" by way of transformation (Forde, 2014). At best, this may indeed support an individual to recovery but will never make radical strides to eradicate this devastating disease once and for all.

The Critical Future of SDP

The previous sections have attempted to synthesize some of the major critiques of the SDP movement from a blend of post-colonial/neo-colonial, critical feminist and neoliberal perspectives. In light of this growing body of literature, an academic appeal to merge SDP programming with critical pedagogy is steadily developing (Lindsey, 2017;

Mwaanga & Prince, 2016). Specifically, Mwaanga and Prince (2016) identify a new direction for SDP curricula to evolve from the current "life-skills" training to models that encourage critical thinking skills (p. 590).

Mwaanga and Prince (2016) claim, "Such development of critical and analytical skills promotes the problematization of wider social, political, cultural and economic inequalities leading to critical, as opposed to prescriptive, action" (p. 590). So far, these appeals have been predominantly anecdotal in nature. Despite the strong theoretical arguments being presented, there is minimal evidence that documents any practical attempts of this kind. While there is growing excitement around this prospect, it is important to note how there is still some skepticism that even with the infusion of liberation pedagogy, SDP programming will still be unfit to serve as a meaningful vehicle for transformative social change (Coalter, 2013).

Ultimately, there is still significant work ahead of SDP scholars and practitioners who envision a future where sports can have a crucial role to play in identifying, challenging and deconstructing the systemic forces that maintain a global structure of oppression and inequality. Coalter (2013) artistically captures this duality, coining Antonio Gramsci's notion of "pessimism of the intellect, and optimism of the will". This emotive statement can be interpreted as a need for further exploratory research within the expanding field of SDP. What follows next then is an attempt to divert to another trajectory away from mainstream scholarly efforts in SDP, into the field of civic engagement and volunteerism as an alternative lens upon which SDP can be explored and better understood.

Civic Engagement

Previous sections of this literature review have laid the historical and contextual groundwork within the realm of international development and then SDP. In a similar fashion, it is now prudent to explore existing literature around the concept of volunteering as the central phenomenon of inquiry. To do this, this section leans upon a combination of the civic engagement and volunteerism literature base. Having offered a definition of the term as well as identifying the various strands of civic engagement including its history and contemporary status in the world today, this piece will tie together the broad notion of civic engagement as it relates to the field of volunteerism.

To begin, there is no single clear definition of civic engagement as it is often utilized across a spectrum of civic activities (Jacoby, 2009; Locklin & Posman, 2016). However, Ehrlich (2000) offers a broadly accepted interpretation of the term as, "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference" (p. vi). Elsewhere, Gottlieb and Robinson (2014) offer a similar definition as "active participation in the public life of a community in an informed, committed, and constructive manner, with a focus on the common good" (p. 16). This can be further broken down into different strands that speak to various forms of civic engagement. These are typically categorized by both political and non-political processes (Ehrlich, 2000; Gaby, 2017), notwithstanding other outlets including both social and moral engagement that may not necessarily be tied to any political meaning (Locklin & Posman, 2016). Otherwise most

definitions of civic engagement include community service, political participation and political activism or advocacy (Locklin & Posman, 2016).

The symbiotic relationship between civic engagement, healthy democracy and a good society is well documented (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Jacoby, 2009; Lussier & Fish, 2012). For this reason, civic education and the desire for local and global citizenship has developed into a staple for multiple educational institutions worldwide (Kopish, 2017). Additionally, civic engagement has been demonstrated as a means of growth and maturation in young adults (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). Flanagan and Levine (2010) elaborate on the personal and psychological benefits of civic engagement to include, "fulfillment of the human need to belong and to feel that life has a purpose beyond the individual gain" (p. 160). The authors go further in explaining that, "Engaging with fellow members of a community-based group also helps youth form social networks, build social capital, and connect to educational and occupational opportunities" (p. 160). This breadth of outcomes captures the extent to which civic engagement can play a supporting role in developing socially proactive young adults.

Despite the positive grounds to reinforce these benefits, evidence suggests there has been a decline in civic engagement in the United States (Putnam, 2010), particularly among youth within the past 30 years (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Godfrey & Cherng, 2016; Koopman, 2013; Levine, 2014; Lopez & Kiesa, 2009; Syvertsen et al., 2011). Research efforts have attempted to explain this decrease, with one such argument suggesting that youth today exhibit an increased cynicism about conventional politics that negatively affects their engagement with political processes (Torney-Purta, Richardson,

& Barber, 2004). More alarmingly, however, another key factor points towards a civic divide across the country (Syvertsen et al., 2011). Godfrey and Cherng (2016) write, "there are also troubling racial/ethnic and socioeconomic inequities in youth's civic engagement", ultimately playing a significant factor in who does and does not participate in civic acts (p. 2219). This has resulted in a lack of civic opportunities available for people who are considered to have a low socio-economic status (Kahne & Sporte, 2008).

While there has been this decline in acts of civic engagement especially among youth, there has been a contrasting rise in volunteerism among the same demographic (Koopman, 2013). Rice and Redlawsk (2009) point to one of the potential concerns of this as, "there is good evidence that young people are volunteering in large numbers, but there is equally strong evidence that this is not translating into further involvement in civic affairs" (p. 3). This observation is further evidenced in other works pointing to increased numbers from the millennial generation who are participating and committed to volunteering (Gaby, 2017). This revelation begs the question as to why more people seem to be volunteering yet fewer seem engaged in other acts of civic engagement?

In seeking to better understand this seemingly contradictory dynamic, some scholars propose a number of possibilities to explain this situation. Some of the reasons why volunteerism has increased can be grouped into more selfish factors (Koopman, 2013). These include the perceived advantage in college admissions that could be gained through the demonstration of volunteering as well as the option of adding to one's resume when seeking a competitive edge in the job market (Koopman, 2013). Other such selfless reasons may include the deliberate efforts by schools and community groups to

encourage volunteering as well as an increased social responsibility towards global social and economic inequalities (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). The following section seeks to further tease out these apparent contradictions while also gleaning from the wider literature base available to help understand the volunteer phenomenon for the purpose of this study.

Volunteerism in International Development

Given the limited nature of SDP volunteer research, this section builds on the foundations of civic engagement and focuses specifically on broader understandings of volunteerism. What follows is an exploration of the research base relative to volunteerism, particularly in the field of international development. This is interesting to explore at the given time considering the rapid growth of international volunteerism, especially in the United States with an upward trend of American volunteers abroad since 2008 (McBride, Lough, & Sherraden, 2012). Having presented some foundational works in the volunteerism literature, this section will conclude with a more narrowed focus on the limited studies that have attempted to better understand the volunteer experience in SDP.

Before investigating some of the research surrounding volunteerism in international development, it is important to establish a definition of the term "volunteering." Penner (2002) offers a definition of volunteering as, "long-term, planned, prosocial behaviors that benefit strangers and occur within an organizational setting" (p. 448). Elsewhere, McBride, Lough and Sherraden (2012) specifically define international volunteerism as, "an organized period of engagement and contribution to society by

individuals who volunteer across an international border" (p. 970). The general consensus of international volunteering aligns itself with generous acts of support.

However, from a critical perspective it is vital to acknowledge the contested nature of volunteerism particularly in international development. In this light, Schech, Mundkur, Skelton and Kothari (2015) contend that at best, volunteerism in international development can foster knowledge and skill exchange, awareness building around structural inequalities and exploitation, as well as people-led solutions towards sustainable developmental thinking (p. 359). The authors go further in reminding that, "international volunteering is embedded in the neoliberal political and economic structures of the development industry and can also be patronizing, self-serving and exploitative" (p. 359). These critiques emerge as a direct challenge to many of the dominant beliefs associated with volunteerism.

At this juncture it is important to assess these broad assumptions pertinent to the volunteer phenomenon. Primary concerns are raised around the core belief that volunteering is depicted by knowledgeable, skilled and motivated individuals (typically representative of social minority states), who impart their wisdom upon the recipients of developmental programming efforts (typically representative of social majority states), who benefit from this relationship. While this is perceived to be the norm of the international volunteer dynamic, some scholars suggest that volunteering can actually have a negative impact on the host communities (Campbell & Warner, 2015). Furthermore, it has also been highlighted that many volunteers have a self-interest in

international volunteering due to evidence supporting increased employability and job prospects (Smith, Cohen, & Pickett, 2014).

Research by Loiseau et al., (2016) compliments this thought. In this study, the research team conducted interviews with multiple program stakeholders, focusing on the perceptions of short-term volunteerism for an international development project in the Dominican Republic. The authors found that both the program participants and volunteers themselves placed a greater significance on the material benefits (such as donations) provided by the program than the actual presence of the volunteers working in their communities (p. 10). This finding bears significance in two ways. First, it calls into question the perceived benefit of having the volunteers on the ground at all. Second, the focus on material benefits offers little by way of sustainable development (p. 10). This example casts some doubt over the need for volunteers in this particular program.

Going further still in their fascinating study of volunteer's photographs, Wehbi and Taylor (2012) performed an analysis of international development photography, highlighting some of the imbalances of the volunteer phenomenon. The authors conclude with links tying the images to colonial, imperialist and neocolonial ideas about developmental logic (p. 536). These connections were drawn from a combination of perspectives. First, the authors found images of children conveying themes of rescue, innocence and undeserved suffering in need of saving (pp. 532-533). Similar themes emerged through photographs of women with strong emphasis on racialized relationships between white and black women, reinforcing the idea of social minority women saving

those women from the social majority world (p. 534). Together these examples divulge the contested nature of volunteerism.

To better understand the volunteer paradox, it is necessary to dig deeper into the literature on international volunteerism. The following section explores some of the major motivational forces that drive the desire for social minority members to participate as volunteers in the social majority world. Additionally, it is valuable to explore existing studies that investigate how volunteer experiences have had an impact on the lives of volunteers themselves. Together, this synthesis helps to establish a greater understanding of the volunteerism phenomenon based upon previous works in international development and broader avenues of sport volunteering.

Volunteer motivations. In their functionalist approach of assessing and understanding volunteer motivations, Clary et al., (1998) describe motivation as the reasons for individuals to, "seek out volunteer opportunities, to commit themselves to volunteer helping, and to sustain their involvement in volunteerism over extended periods of time" (p. 1517). Reasons for volunteering are broadly categorized by altruistic and egoistic motives (Eley & Kirk, 2002). Altruistic motives relate to intrinsic rewards to come from the act of volunteering itself, for example the feeling of satisfaction from helping somebody (Wang, 2004). While egoistic motives are related to more tangible rewards that result from volunteering, such as strengthening one's career prospects by adding to their professional resume (Wang, 2004).

When deciphering the two, some studies suggest that altruistic motives may precede egoistic motives in volunteering (Bang, Ross, & Reio, Jr, 2013). However other

studies reveal there is an equal if not stronger motivation among volunteers towards egoistic gains when deciding to volunteer (Coghlan, 2008). It is evident there are a multiplicity of volunteer motivations which lend a more complex perspective to the altruism – egoism debate (Clary & Snyder, 1999).

To better understand the volunteerism phenomenon, Clary and Synder (1999) proposed the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) to assess people's reasons for volunteering (p. 157). This model identified six categories of responses that capture the reasons, purposes and motivations behind why people potentially serve as volunteers. These are: values, understanding, enhancement, career, social and protective (p. 157). Clary et al., (1998) go on to define each of these functions and offer some examples of how they unfold in the volunteer context.

Values relate to an individual's desire to help others due to humanistic concerns. Understanding of new knowledge, skills and abilities through volunteering offers a new learning experience that might otherwise go unpracticed. Enhancement is reported when volunteers feel positive about their role through a sense of growth and development that fosters happiness and satisfaction. Career recognizes the professional benefits that might transpire through volunteer work. Social acknowledges the opportunities for volunteers to engage in activities with friends and develop new relationships. Protective is centered upon guarding the volunteer from negative feelings of the self that may be more focused on addressing one's own personal problems.

Clary and Snyder (1999) further report that values, understanding, and enhancement typically reveal themselves as the most important functions, while career,

social, and protective are usually functions of less importance (p. 157). However, the authors state these responses are highly dependent on the age of the volunteer and this should always be a key consideration when using this model to assess volunteer motivations.

Elsewhere the Volunteer Motivations Scale for International Sporting Events (VMS-ISE) has been adopted as another measure to identify the motivations of volunteers (Bang, Alexandris, & Ross, 2009). This specific scale was used to measure the volunteer motivations and satisfactions at the 2002 soccer World Cup in Korea and revealed six major motivation factors. Bang, Alexandris and Ross (2009) report these six factors as the expression of values, patriotism, interpersonal contacts, personal growth, career orientation and extrinsic rewards (p. 122). Using a revised version of the VMS-ISE measure of volunteers in the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, the authors further tested the reliability and validity of the scale and found evidence that supported its application in the field of motivations for sporting event volunteering.

More recent research has contributed further to the volunteerism literature base in international development by adding nuanced motives within the altruistic – egoistic conversation (Campbell & Warner, 2015; Doerr & Taïeb, 2017; Pate, Hardin, & Hums, 2017). For example, when investigating the motives of volunteers for Canada World Youth – an international, cultural exchange program for young people – Campbell and Warner (2015) found additional motivations such as the need for a challenge; to enhance cultural awareness; to travel; and to gain international experience (p. 552).

Similar results were revealed by Doerr and Taïeb (2017) who examined the motivations of young volunteers including a drive for self-transformation; the desire to free oneself from local concerns and ties; a drive for cultivation of spirit and mastery of the past; and a desire to master or know the world (p. 38). While these motivations can be telling in some instances, there is a still a considerable lack of research that seeks to connect these motivations with volunteer experiences in a more holistic manner (Campbell & Warner, 2015). For example, it should be considered whether or not volunteers were already aware of these motivations or if these perhaps developed over time through their volunteering experiences.

Volunteer impact. In addition to understanding the motivations behind why people choose to volunteer, it is crucial to realize the impact that volunteering can have on the lives of the volunteers (Campbell & Warner, 2015). Oftentimes volunteer impact is gauged by the recipients of developmental programming but seldom explored on the volunteers themselves (Peachey et al., 2015). However, the notion that the volunteering experience can fundamentally impact the volunteers' awareness and sense of self is one that has been shown before (Wearing, 2001). Yet these connections are rarely made between the actual experiences of volunteers and the impact these experiences have on their own lives when returning home (Campbell & Warner, 2015). As a result, there is a lacuna of research that contributes to this particularly in the field of SDP (Peachey, Cohen, Borland, & Lyras, 2011). Nevertheless, some insights can be gained by further exploring the field of international development and wider reaches of volunteering at sporting events.

Much like the multiple motivations for people to volunteer in international development, there are similarly a handful of studies that present multiple impacts or outcomes resulting from experiences of civic engagement through volunteering (Eley & Kirk, 2002; Kahne & Sporte, 2008). There are several models that can be employed to identify these impacts akin to the previously described VFI model used to assess and understand volunteer motivations. Once such model is the International Volunteer Impacts Survey (IVIS) proposed by Lough, Sherraden and McBride (2012). The authors in this particular study used the IVIS to assess volunteer impacts for an educational international service program for students travelling abroad. The authors found the IVIS as an appropriate tool to measure volunteer impact outcomes focused on "international contacts, open-mindedness, perceived international understanding, intercultural relations, life plans, civic activism, and community engagement" (p. 489). This study demonstrated a wide range of impacts that touched the lives of the volunteers in ways that affected their perceptions of the world beyond their lives at home.

More recently, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) produced a report on the Canadian Volunteer Cooperation Program offering a review of volunteer experiences overseas (CIDA, 2005). Their report published multiple findings that demonstrated how volunteers' experiences overseas had an impact on their own lives upon returning home to Canada. Examples of such impacts included a transformation in volunteers' beliefs and values, a greater sense of global citizenship and an enhancement of skills (p. 48-49). This report further speaks to the impact of international volunteering and demonstrates the transformational capabilities of such an experience.

Briefly returning to Campbell and Warner (2015) and their research on Canada World Youth, the authors discovered six main impact areas on the volunteers' lives: "values and attitudes; knowledge and learning; skills; personal relationships; career/studies; and local/global action" (p. 553). When drawing connections between volunteer experiences and the impact this had on the volunteers, the authors found that more personal interactions with the local people had a greater personal impact on the volunteers themselves (p. 571). In contrast, for volunteers who had more of a work-related experience with limited interaction with the local people, the impact was more professionally based (p. 571). This was an interesting finding as it related more to understanding how the volunteer experience itself was significant in determining the type of impact on the volunteer.

Finally, a study by Brown (2005) sought to examine the benefits felt by participants who engaged in volunteer vacationing. Closely aligned with volunteer tourism, volunteer vacations are considered travel experiences conducted by "vacation-minded" tourists who wish to engage in a small level of volunteerism while on their travels (Brown, 2005). In her study of a small sample of volunteer vacationers, the author found that volunteers derived several benefits from their volunteer vacation experience. These benefits were classified as either temporary or enduring. An example of a temporary benefit was a "higher level of satisfaction with the overall leisure trip as a result of the volunteering experience" (p. 494). An example of enduring benefits center around the benefits of both the self and others which was typically mediated by the level of social interactions with local people from the destination itself (p. 494). This study

provided another example that points to the nuanced ways in which the volunteer experience can result in impacts that can be more enduring than others.

Based on the studies presented above, it is evident that volunteers can gain or benefit from their experience in ways that impact and potentially transform their own lives. However, many of these studies offer a limited insight by way of simply documenting the ways in which these transformations are reported by volunteers upon returning to their homes. Fewer studies seek to dig deeper into understanding the relationship between the volunteer experience itself and the variables in these experiences that in turn can have a range of impact on the volunteers. It is therefore important to further explore these relationships between the actual experience of the volunteers and the impact this can have on them. It was the general direction of this study to better understand the impact that SDP volunteering in particular can have on volunteers as it relates to their continued experience in the AVOCA project.

Volunteerism in SDP

As mentioned at several points throughout this study, there is a significant gap in SDP research that focuses on the experiences of volunteers (Peachey et al., 2014). This is particularly concerning given how SDP programs are almost entirely dependent on a volunteer workforce to implement their programming (Meier & Stutzer, 2008). Surprisingly then, this literature base is not yet established in the field of SDP. Therefore, in an attempt to further funnel towards the destination of SDP volunteerism, it is interesting to note how other such volunteer research has been conducted in the wider realm of sporting events and programs. These types of programs are more closely related

to volunteerism in sporting mega-events such as the Olympics, Paralympic Games and the FIFA World Cup (Bang & Ross, 2009; Pate, Hardin, & Hums, 2017). These studies all generally conclude the importance of volunteers in the success of such events.

While there is a significant gap in SDP research that seeks to develop a holistic understanding of the volunteerism phenomenon, there have been few studies conducted around volunteer motivation in broader Sport for Development (SFD) programs. In their study exploring the motives and retention factors of SFD volunteers for the World Scholar-Athlete Games, Peachey et al., (2014) adopted Clary and Synder's (1999) functionalist approach to volunteer motivation. With this model as their theoretical framework, the authors found that volunteers were motivated by values, social, understanding, career, and self-enhancement factors (p. 1064). Also, when volunteers felt their motives were fulfilled, the authors reported that volunteers continued to donate their time to the event (p. 1064). In conclusion of their research, the authors recommend very practical recommendations to SFD programs that wish to increase their retention of volunteers. This meant attempting to satisfy multiple motives that were not simply altruistic or social-justice lead (p. 1066). Instead, SFD programs should emphasize the social and fun aspects of volunteering including opportunities for career advancement and learning of new skills (p. 1066).

Elsewhere, research by Smith, Cohen and Pickett (2014) similarly identified a substantial space in the SDP literature that so far has failed to understand the motivations or impacts of volunteering within SDP. The purpose of these author's research was to explore volunteer motivations and impacts over a long-term SDP program in Granada,

Africa. Soccer Without Borders was the program under study as a multinational development organization using soccer to engage young people in a social support program (p. 301). In their qualitative case study, the authors conducted nine semi-structured interviews with key personnel and triangulated their findings through observational data collected over a five-week period (p. 304).

Three key findings emerged from this research. First, the authors found that volunteers were driven by a desire for a global experience (p. 305). This meant that volunteers were strongly motivated by leaving their home and travelling abroad. Second, volunteers were also motivated to volunteer as they believed this would have a positive impact in advancing their career goals (p. 309). This finding aligns itself with the previous discussion regarding career improving motivations in international development. Third, the authors commented on the volunteers' love of sport as another important factor in participating in this particular SDP program. The authors conclude their thoughts with a rejection of the dominant critiques of international volunteers and their motivations, signaling that participants in this study shared a simultaneous concern for personal growth and commitment to the Soccer Without Borders cause (p. 311).

For the added interest of this research, Smith, Cohen and Pickett (2014) proceeded to state that, "volunteers expressed the ability of sport to transcend differences, such as language, and allow them to connect with those in the community despite structural barriers" (p. 313). This observation speaks to the generally uncontested and poorly-evidenced belief in the prosocial nature of sport within the SDP context. Furthermore, this finding further presents an indication of the widely held assumption of

sport's mythopoeic powers among sporting enthusiasts. The authors conclude with, "Our study did not find evidence of the perceived power differentials indicative of neo-colonial approaches to development" (p. 313). This may be due to the fact that this particular study did not use any form of critical theory as a lens for their work.

In summary, this section has sought to provide a platform in which to understand the volunteerism phenomenon. Specifically, by leaning on previous studies conducted in international development, this section has helped to define international volunteerism, and explore some of the main motivations and impact of volunteering in the broader spectrum of international development work. While there is a significant gap in volunteer literature specific to SDP, some studies have attempted to explore the motivations of volunteers in other sporting events and programs. Despite this research lacuna, there is an opportunity to meet Darnell's (2013) calls for a greater integration of SDP studies within the broader spectrum of international development. The previous sections then have provided a platform to integrate the larger scope of volunteerism in international development, combined with the few studies of volunteer motivation in SDP. Now that the literature base of developmental theory, international development, civic engagement and volunteerism have been explored, the final section of this chapter focuses on recent efforts of SDP in El Salvador.

SDP in El Salvador

This chapter concludes by re-centering this literature specifically to understand the current landscape of SDP in El Salvador. To date, two studies have been conducted around a physical education program focused on developing students' humanistic

principles and life skills in an attempt to curb the potential onset of violent and aggressive behaviors among youth (André & Mandigo, 2013; Mandigo, Corlett, & Ticas, 2016). Both studies were focused on the same "Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility" theory that Mandigo, Corlett and Ticas (2016) explain focuses on, "life skills such as self-control, conflict resolution, getting along with others, goal setting, caring, compassion, etc." (p. 26).

The first study by André and Mandigo (2013) conducted a case study focusing on the training of university students at the University de Salvador as future physical education teachers in a newly developed humanistic PE curriculum. The curriculum was based upon Helison's (2003) taking personal and social responsibility (TPSR) model. This model is based upon four key principles. Two principles focus on personal responsibility (self-motivation and self-direction) and two principles focus on social responsibility (respect and caring for others) (p. 110). Over a three-year period, the authors tracked the progress of trainee teachers and found that graduates of the program felt, "confident and competent to deliver PE classes with most of the humanistic principles" (p. 131). The authors gathered their data via responses from questionnaires, reflection templates and interviews (p. 114).

Despite the seemingly positive confidence levels reported by the teachers, many of them still felt they were challenged by some of the teaching principles being asked of them (André & Mandigo, 2013). One example of these teaching principles included the principle of student empowerment. However, the authors found that the trainee PE teachers did not fully grasp the notion of empowerment and instead misunderstood this

with the concept of leadership skills (p. 131). Ultimately the authors were unable to conclude whether or not the teachers were successful in having an impact on their students and the wider community through the teaching of humanistic principles through PE (p. 131). The authors recommend that further longitudinal research be conducted that offers a better understanding of the teachers' efforts to deliver humanistic PE lessons on a daily basis (p. 131).

This initial research was followed up with a study by Mandigo, Corlett and Ticas (2016) who similarly focused on the same humanistic PE program being delivered. However, this study provided an alternative perspective by analyzing the impact this program had on the young students themselves within a select number of schools. To gather this data, the authors used a 54-item questionnaire to compile responses from the students. The results of this study presented a descriptive account of how life skills training through the humanistic PE program can have a positive impact on the prevention of youth violence (p. 33). This was particularly evident among young boys more than girls (p. 33).

These results highlight some of the potential that purposefully humanistic PE programs can help decrease aggressive and violent behaviors among youth (p. 34). Combined, these two studies offered a unique two-part exploration of a physical education program that sought to target youth aggression and violence in El Salvador. Given the mass lacuna in sport-related research in El Salvador (Gadais, Webb, & Rodriguez, 2017), these research efforts alone are crucial in understanding how sport,

through school-based PE, can have an impact on both teachers and students in El Salvador.

A more recent study by Gadais, Webb and Rodriguez (2017) proposed a method by which SDP programs can be evaluated from a distance. The authors put forward this evaluative procedure due to the difficulty to access some SDP organizations particularly after such operations have ended (p. 12). This method primarily included an in-depth content analysis that reviewed SDP program documents and reports. The authors presented a case study to use as an example of this proposed evaluative method. The case under examination was the Juventud Olímpica Municipal, Modelo de Club, San Salvador – an SDP program provided in part by the UN and UNICEF with the intention of achieving certain Millennium Development Goals (p. 14). The outcome of this evaluation was an 84-page report that commented on six sections of the program: 1) Context; 2) Basic concepts of the model; 3) Model structure; 4) Methods of attention; 5) Plantification and 6) Research sheets and documents (p. 15).

While the results of this study provided plenty of information rich feedback from some of the main stakeholders involved in the program, the authors admit it is not possible to produce any concrete evidence by way of results with their model (p. 21). This finding is crucial as it relates to one of the fundamental critiques of SDP outlined at the beginning of the chapter, claiming that minimal evidence exists to support the use of sport as a developmental tool. The authors further describe this weakness by conceding, "the report itself provides little in the way of specific, measurable, attainable, and timed objectives" (p. 21). With a report that is solely dependent upon the discourses of the key

stakeholders themselves, it should be of no surprise at all that the narrative presented laudable, pro-sports claims with minimal substance (p. 21).

Drawing upon the works of the first two studies (André & Mandigo, 2013; Mandigo, Corlett, & Ticas, 2016), it can be argued how these programs adopted a neoliberal approach to combatting negative social behaviors of aggression and violence among youth. This is primarily evidenced by programming that focused on changing the individual behaviors of participants through the medium of humanistic PE education. While these attempts to improve the negative behaviors among youth are no doubt valiant, it should be no surprise that the authors conclusions were not convincing in terms of the long-term behavioral change of teachers, students and the wider impact on community. It is clear to see from the previous social political and economic contextual analysis of El Salvador the challenges these participants face that are both intersectional and deep-rooted. Overcoming these negative behaviors among Salvadorian youth surely cannot be achieved by way of behavioral transformation alone. It must be clear that combined efforts should be made towards challenging some of the core structural and systemic forces at play in breeding this environment of violence.

The third study presented in this section (Gadais, Webb, & Rodriguez, 2017) further evidenced the dominant discourse that is often intimately connected to the SDP movement. This research revealed the evangelistic narratives of SDP stakeholders within a specific SDP program in El Salvador. The findings of this study draw parallels with another key critique of SDP organizations that are essentialist in nature, perpetuating the seldom contested mythopoeic status of sports. Based upon a review of these previous

three studies centered around sporting developmental initiatives in El Salvador, it is worth noting how an SDP program infused with critical pedagogy could provide a fascinating study to carry forth in this particular context.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to provide the contextual landscape of this phenomenological inquiry concerning volunteers' experiences in a Salvadorian SDP program. With this context as the base, this chapter has presented the historical landscape of SDP within the broader structures of international development. Presenting the key theories of development helps to understand the critiques of both international development programming and SDP. It is only with this type of rich theoretical appreciation that meaningful solutions can be proposed. It is crucial that links have been made connecting these together as SDP can often be perceived as its own developmental movement. However, the opening section of this chapter has drawn parallels between the theories and critiques of both, and how this might shape a future in developmental programming.

This chapter has also sought to flesh out the broader literature on civic engagement and volunteerism within international development and SDP. It was important to explore the breadth of this literature base within a wider context. This chapter revealed how volunteer motivations can be broadly categorized into altruistic and egoistic categories. The impact of volunteering can often be skewed with the frequently overlooked appreciation of how volunteer participants themselves actually benefit greatly from the volunteer experience. The final section of this chapter attempted to tie together

this literary journey by presenting the few research-based studies on previous and existing SDP programs in El Salvador. The relatively few programs discussed is representative of the limited SDP efforts that are currently taking place in El Salvador.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter offers a full outline and detailed description of the key components for the research methods of this study. After restating the research questions, this chapter first identifies the research design that offers the overall structure for how data was collected, analyzed and presented throughout this phenomenological approach. Next this chapter provides a more detailed description of the data that was collected, including the different types of data, site selection and study participants. Utilizing a combination of data collection methods and data analysis techniques, this section also highlights the procedures that were in place to gather, organize and then make sense of the data. Throughout this chapter I lean upon the key authors informing my methodological decisions, offering a justification for why this data was appropriate in answering the research questions and purpose of this study. The final section of this chapter addresses any validity issues or concerns as well as detailing the checks in place that upheld the credibility and trustworthiness of this research.

Restatement of Research Questions

Through a phenomenological research design, this study aimed to describe, explicate and interpret the interconnections and interactions between participants experiences, motivations and impacts when volunteering for the AVOCA project. At this stage it is pertinent to restate the research questions posed by this phenomenological inquiry. The primary research question served as a guide and was not an entirely rigid and unalterable question (Patton, 2015). Rather, the primary question was supported by

the secondary questions and could have evolved within reason as the inquiry unfolded (Patton, 2015).

Primary Research Question

1) How do participants experience and understand their role as volunteers in the AVOCA project?

Secondary Research Questions

1) What have been the participants' experiences as volunteers in the project?
2) What motivates the participants to volunteer in the project?
3) What has been the impact on the lives of the participants through volunteering for the project?

The primary research question was both exploratory and interpretive in nature, as it sought to identify and understand the essence of the volunteering phenomenon in the AVOCA project. In an attempt to dig deeper into the volunteer phenomenon, the secondary research questions aimed to flesh out the participants' experiences of volunteering, their motivations to volunteer and the impact that volunteering in the AVOCA project has had on their own lives. The first of these secondary research questions was designed to elicit descriptive responses from the participants based upon their recollections of their own volunteering experiences. The two following research questions were designed to capture more reflexive responses from the participants. What follows is the research design section that lays the framework for how the answers to these questions above were collected and analyzed.

Research Design

This research embraced qualitative methods to guide this phenomenological study. Before detailing the exact steps that were involved in the execution of this research, it is essential to succinctly justify the decision to adopt qualitative methodology to answer the proposed research questions. Fundamentally, qualitative research tries to make sense of something and is typically employed in the social sciences and applied fields (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Qualitative research is primarily concerned with a focus on specific situations or people, adopting an inductive approach to understanding meanings, processes and contexts (Maxwell, 2013).

Glesne (2011) speaks to the power of qualitative research in that, "researchers are often seeking to make sense of actions, narratives and the ways in which they intersect" (p. 1). This type of research often situates the researcher in a particular setting that locates the observer in the world (Creswell, 2013). The natural setting expects the researcher to serve as the key instrument for the study (Creswell, 2013). This demands a hands-on approach to research in which the researcher is not only collecting the study data themselves, but also analyzing the data. The researcher may use an instrument to assist with this, however this process still requires a level of complex reasoning on the part of the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Phenomenological methodology. Within the qualitative research paradigm there are multiple research designs available for scholars to best guide their study and ultimately answer their research question(s) (Patton, 2015). Some of the most common research designs include ethnographic, case study, grounded theory, and narrative

research approaches (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). However, in order to answer the research questions posed by this particular study, the qualitative method adopted was a phenomenological research design. More precisely, this research embraced hermeneutical phenomenology as a specific strand of phenomenological inquiry. Before exploring this further, it is useful to paint a broad picture of phenomenology and how this emerged as a methodical option for this study.

Phenomenological research was first formed and validated under the original founder of Czech Republic born, German philosopher – Edmund Husserl (Giorgi, 2008; Macann, 1993; Patton, 2015). Husserl fundamentally believed the only way for people to fully understand an experience it must be described, explicated and interpreted (Patton, 2015). It is this process of "meaning-making" that makes sense of the world through lived experiences and essentially form a worldview (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). Husserl advanced a specific scientific approach to phenomenology that advocated the researcher as someone who is detached from the phenomenon under study (Reed, 1994). This removal of preconceptions was to be achieved by way of suspending all existing beliefs and assumptions before embarking on the phenomenological inquiry. This process would then allow the researcher to offer a rich description of the phenomenon that is both accurate and unspoiled (Jasper, 1994).

Husserl's writings were soon followed by Heidegger, Sarte, and Merleau-Ponty, who collectively have been regarded as the most important phenomenologists of the 20th century (Macann, 1993). These scholars have driven the advance of phenomenological inquiry within the human sciences. Specifically, this has increased popularity in

phenomenological inquiries centered on psychology, education, nursing, medicine, and health care (Creswell, 2013; van Manen, 2014). While there has been this steady growth, it is important to highlight some of the key concerns raised by phenomenological scholars that are critical of its deployment in such disciplines (Giorgi, 2008).

It can be challenging to fully understand the positioning of phenomenology in the social sciences. The reasoning is generally attributed to its diverse scope across both philosophical and research paradigms (Giorgi, 1971). Yet across both worlds, phenomenology maintains a positioning that requires one to gaze in the places where meanings and understandings originate (van Manen, 2014). In this light phenomenology is fundamentally the study of essences (van Manen, 1990). The essence is located within the chosen phenomenon of study for a person or group of people, who have all experienced the phenomenon of interest in some way shape or form (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). While it could be easy for the term "essence" to appear as a mystic entity, van Manen (1990) explains that it is important to realize how it should be understood as a linguistic construction of a phenomenon (p. 39).

In order to explore the essence of lived experience and in this case, the essence of volunteering for the AVOCA project, it is key to recognize that experiences are often lived through without one necessarily taking a reflective view of it (van Manen, 1990; van Manen, 2014). The researcher's role is to carefully navigate a methodological path that guides participants through a reflective thought process that is dependent upon the participant recalling their time engaged within a particular experience and phenomenon of interest (van Manen, 2014). However, this is no simple task for the researcher as it

requires a skilled approach to obtain reflective acts through words alone. An additional challenge lays in the construction of a rich description and interpretation of these collective thoughts that truly captures the essence of a particular phenomenon (van Manen, 1990; van Manen, 2014).

Phenomenological research provides a flexible framework of inquiry, yet it is essential to recognize how there can be vast differences that characterize its implementation (Giorgi, 2008). Given the wide scope of phenomenological inquiry, scholars tend to make the mistake of mixing different strands of phenomenological methods and confusing the purpose, process and overall research design (van Manen, 2014). Researchers should therefore invest heavily in identifying which strand of phenomenological inquiry will guide their study and explain how these variations maintain consistency with the foundations and principles of phenomenological research (Giorgi, 2008).

There are two variations that seem most popular in phenomenological inquiry. These are *transcendental* phenomenology and *hermeneutical* phenomenology (Creswell, 2013). Each trajectory possesses a nuanced focus and overall approach. First, stemming from the works of Husserl, transcendental phenomenology is concerned with thick and rich description of a certain phenomenon (Husserl, 1962; Moustakas, 1994). The aim of the researcher is to provide a detailed and descriptive case that presents the essence of the chosen phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Transcendental phenomenology is primarily different from hermeneutical phenomenology by focusing less on data interpretation and more description (Creswell, 2013). However, the likes of Heidegger and Gadamer

fundamentally rejected this sole focus on description and instead advanced hermeneutic phenomenology as an alternative. This next section further highlights how hermeneutical phenomenology separated itself and how this was presented as the design for this study.

Hermeneutical phenomenology. The evolution of hermeneutical phenomenology predominantly transpired through the works of Martin Heidegger – a scholarly disciple of Edmund Husserl. Heidegger's methods went beyond the initial aims of providing descriptive accounts of chosen phenomena. His resistance to the objective claims of descriptive methodology stemmed from a contrasting epistemological understanding of knowledge construction compared to the reductionist view of descriptive phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962). He advanced the hermeneutical approach that positions the researcher as a co-constructor of meaning. This position further argues that individuals are situated within the world, and cannot detach themselves from historical, political, social, or cultural contexts as key parts of their existence and background (Heidegger, 1962). Any encounter with a phenomenon then is subject to interpretation that cannot possibly be free of these influences.

Hermeneutical phenomenology distinctively seeks to interpret and explain what the essence of a phenomenon actually means. This is echoed by Kincheloe and McLaren (2011) who write, "The hermeneutic act of interpretation involves in its most elemental articulation making sense of what has been observed in a way that communicates understanding" (p. 293). This interpretive relationship between the researcher and chosen phenomenon of study is captured through the hermeneutical cycle. This cycle of interpretation is interwoven between the researcher's pre-understandings and existing

knowledge of a phenomena, their perspectives shaped by their socio-cultural background as a starting point for interpretation and assumptions that are rooted in this background (Benner, 1994). Instead of being linear, this interpretive process is cyclic as it moves between the researcher's presuppositions and new insights gleaned from engagement with study participants. This ultimately results in a phenomenological co-construction of meaning (Koch, 1996).

The first step in this process involves the researcher choosing a phenomenon that is deeply interesting to them (Creswell, 2013). This results in the establishment of a suitable research question to guide the inquiry. Next van Manen (1990) states the biggest challenge for researchers, "is not always that we know too little about the phenomenon we wish to investigate, but that we know too much" (p. 46). This problem can be addressed by way of bracketing. Bracketing aims to withstand researcher bias when embarking on their study (van Manen, 1990; van Manen, 2014). As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, Husserl first coined this bracketing technique the *epoché* that Moustakas (1994) further explains, "requires the elimination of suppositions" (p. 26). The purpose is to protect the research study of biases brought forward by the researcher and attempts to take a fresh perspective of the phenomenon being explored (Moustakas, 1994).

At this critical juncture, it is important to note how this is neither a clear nor simple task. It requires great discipline and measures in place to protect the credibility and trustworthiness of the data being collected and analyzed. As van Manen (1990) states, "It is better to make explicit our understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories" (p. 47). It is not necessary to forget these rather to come to

terms with them while intentionally holding them at bay (van Manen, 1990). This positioning also remains true to the foundations of hermeneutical phenomenology that recognizes the researcher as an individual who is situated historically, politically, socially, and culturally. It is the researcher's perspectives that makes them unique in driving the inquiry.

For the data analysis phase of the study, hermeneutical phenomenological centers the explication of texts for interpreting meaning and understanding (van Manen, 2014). These texts typically qualifiy in the form of interview transcripts, documents, field notes, analytical memos and anecdotes, all of which serve to capture the essence of an individual or group's lived experience. These texts hold the crucial data and meanings that must then be interpreted and explicated by the researcher. This is carried out by way of analytical procedures that are both rigorous and thorough in nature and process.

What follows is a detailed description of the data collection and analysis processes for this research as they are aligned with hermeneutical phenomenology. The next section is then organized in two key parts. First, the type of data for this study will be defined by the setting and study participants. The participant selection criteria will also be explained. Second, the following section will also describe the data collection procedures that took place. Here the techniques used to organize and then analyze this data will be identified and explained. This chapter will conclude with a discussion to addresses both the trustworthiness and limitations of this study pertinent to the data collection and analysis methods outlined below.

Data

The data for this study was collected directly from volunteer participants during the AVOCA project Holy Week program in El Salvador over the 2018 Easter holidays. The Holy Week program consisted of a two-day coaching education training and five days of youth soccer camps involving participants from three different communities. Collecting data during this particular week was ideal for three key reasons. First, it presented an opportunity to collect data through face-to-face interactions with both the local volunteers as well as the international volunteers. Second, the data was collected from within the context of AVOCA's Holy Week program in action. Finally, the combination of collecting data from the volunteers in El Salvador while participating in the Holy Week program's events allowed for complete immersion and greater exposure to the interactions between all volunteers. This was particularly key for the authenticity of the observations and field notes recorded that complemented the data collected from the in-person interviews.

A Voice of Central Americans (AVOCA). Before offering the description of the research site for data collection, it is important to provide a brief history of the AVOCA project. AVOCA was founded in 2009 by Father Peter O'Neil, an Irish Catholic Priest who served at a small church parish in the El Pepeto community of the Salvadorian capital – San Salvador. During his time in El Salvador throughout the civil war era, Father O'Neil witnessed an increasingly severe lack of opportunities for young people within the community. As a result, he decided to develop soccer camps for the children in his parish's communities to participate in some form of organized sport as an alternative

to youth violence. Father O'Neil invited his relative – a soccer coach in England – to visit him in El Salvador and deliver some soccer activities to the children in the communities. Ten years later the AVOCA project has had a total of 60 volunteer coaches and over 1000 young children participate in the Holy Week program spanning five different communities.

The Holy Week program is structured around the Easter holidays in El Salvador as this is a national holiday period. The AVOCA project organizes a trip for 10 days to Soyapango – a municipality of San Salvador – taking between six to ten volunteers from the United Kingdom and United States. These volunteers predominantly serve as soccer coaches for the program. The time spent within these communities is divided into two main events; 1) a two-day coaching education clinic with 20-30 local volunteer soccer coaches in attendance, and; 2) a series of soccer camps co-delivered by the international and local Salvadorian volunteers for the children of these communities. At the conclusion of each visit, both the volunteer coaches and the children receive a diploma commending their participation.

Site of study. The setting upon which the majority of data was collected was Estadio España, a sport complex located in the Soyapango municipality of the capital San Salvador. The complex contained multiple facilities including one sand-based soccer pitch, a full-sized grass soccer pitch, multiple caged soccer and basketball courts and classroom spaces. This site is a hub for sporting activities within the neighboring communities and was guarded by armed security who patrolled two main entrances to the stadium. In addition, the stadium is considered one of few neutral locations in Soyapango

where members of different communities can mix together safely with diminished fear of gang activity. This site was identified as the best possible location for the interviews given van Manen's (2014) recommendation of selecting places that are more inviting for participants to recall and reflect on their experiences (p. 315). This was an obvious decision given how the facility has been the site for most AVOCA activities over past years.

The AVOCA volunteers typically travelled to Estadio España early in the mornings and were based there throughout the duration of the day. Each day was split in two parts with a morning session and an afternoon session. The same format applied for both the coach education training as well as the soccer camps. The only time volunteers usually left the site was for lunch at a shopping complex containing a supermarket and multiple fast-food restaurants conveniently located next to the stadium. Estadio España was ultimately the best possible setting for data collection given the relative safety of the complex combined with the interplay of all AVOCA activities that took place on this site. The site also contained multiple seating areas which offered a friendly environment for the interviews to be conducted.

Study participants. Ten volunteers were identified to participate in interviews about their experiences with AVOCA. Six of the volunteers were local Salvadorian nationals and lived in the Soyapango municipality, representing three different communities. The remaining four volunteers were internationally based from a combination of the United Kingdom and United States. Together this participant group offered a blend of volunteers in the program with similar roles yet different backgrounds.

This number of participants was deemed sufficient for this study as it offered an accurate reflection of the volunteer participants in the program (Seidman, 2013). Individuals were identified who between them all experienced the phenomenon of volunteerism with AVOCA (Creswell, 2013). These accumulated experiences provided a vast amount of data and information required to answer the research questions of this study (Seidman, 2013).

Specifically, the ten study participants were identified by way of purposeful sampling. One of the main criteria for this selection was the volunteers' repeat participation in the AVOCA project during the Holy Week program for a minimum of three years or more. As Patton (2015) explains, "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for in-depth study" (p. 264). The intentional selection of participants with an accumulated wealth of experience provided rich information for analysis in seeking to understand the volunteer phenomenon.

Participant ages ranged from early 20's to late 50's with some participants in college and others closer to retirement. The interview participants were all male since there were no female volunteers who met the participant criteria of three or more years volunteering for AVOCA. Collectively, these participants accumulated over 80 different volunteer experiences in AVOCA's Holy Week program. Some participants were volunteers since the beginning of the program in 2009 while others volunteered for the three-year minimum criteria. All volunteers were asked to demonstrate their willingness to participate in the study and provided informed consent ahead of the interview. Participants had the option to choose not to participate in the study and it was made clear

that these wishes would be met with no challenge or repercussions impacting their role with AVOCA.

Study access. My own position as a participant-researcher offered a unique level of access to the AVOCA volunteers. My involvement in the project since 2013 allowed time to develop and maintain a level of trust and friendship with the local community members. Additionally, the volunteers travelling from the UK and USA were also people that I have developed relationships with throughout this time. Therefore, I was able to purposefully identify participants for the study based upon the selection criteria and directly invite these members to participate. While these relationships served as an advantage in some respects, my active role in the project and my position as a participant-researcher also presented some challenges as discussed in the limitations section of this chapter.

The ethical considerations for carrying out this research were of high importance particularly when protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the study participants (Patton, 2015). Each member that was invited to participate in the study was asked to complete the IRB-approved consent forms before any data was collected. Both electronic versions of the document were sent ahead of the interview in addition to printed copies that were presented before the face-to-face interview. These informed consent documents provided full disclosure on the goals of the research in addition to the confidentiality measures in place, the benefits of the research and documented the official IRB approval number and contact information.

To protect the identities of the study participants, pseudonyms were used for all digital materials (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). It was not anticipated that any sensitive material would be discussed, however this was a technique in place for best practice and participant ease. Participants chose pseudonyms for themselves that were applied to disguise their identity in the interest of privacy and protection as human subjects. Additional pseudonyms were adopted for any members involved in the organization whose identities were referenced by the research participants during their interviews. These physical copies of interview materials were be secured safely in a locked office space during both the data collection and analysis phases.

Data Collection

In keeping with the phenomenological emphasis of discovering the meaning of lived experience, this research sought to "borrow" participants' experiences volunteering for AVOCA (van Manen, 1990). Coupled with the participants' reflections, this study attempted to come to an understanding of the phenomenon of interest (van Manen, 1990). In his manuscript on capturing the essence of the lived experience, van Manen (1990) further explains the value of this endeavor in that, "We gather other people's experiences because they allow us to become more experienced ourselves" (p. 62). It is this collective perspective that allowed for an enriched rendering of the chosen phenomenon (van Manen, 1990).

The following sub-sections outline the data collection methods and techniques that best served the overall aim of gathering data on participants' experiences, motivations and the impact of volunteering with the AVOCA project. This was captured

by three methods of data collection; 1) interviews, 2) observations and 3) field notes. While these methods offered a combination of different data sets, the primary data collection method was centered upon face-to-face interviewing during the Holy Week program. Starting with the interview process, what follows next is an explanation of each data collection method highlighting some of the strengths and considerations to be aware of for each method. A step-by-step plan detailing the specific techniques for these data collection methods is also shared.

Interviews. Qualitative interviewing has emerged as a data gathering method under the umbrella of the naturalistic research paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In contrast to traditional positivistic research, Rubin and Rubin (2012) explain that naturalistic research is "often guided by a social construction approach that focuses on how people perceive their worlds and how they interpret their experiences" (p. 3). Qualitative interviewing then was well suited as a means of data collection for phenomenological inquiry as this approach focuses on richness and depth rather than breadth, in seeking to understand individuals and groups within a specific context (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Building on the earlier rationale for a qualitative study, qualitative interviewing also differentiates itself from other methods of qualitative inquiry in that it seeks to understand the un-seen perspectives of individuals or groups (Glesne, 2011). Oftentimes, it is not possible to fully understand the thoughts and feelings of people through observations from afar (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). Additionally, it is impossible to observe behaviors in situations and contexts that took place in the past. This is why

interviewing emerged as the best possible method to explore peoples' experiences, thoughts and feelings from their own unique perspectives. Patton (2015) summarizes this notion, "We interview to find out what is in and on someone else's mind to gather their stories" (p. 426). Simply put, interviewing offers access to an individual or group of people for what is otherwise impossible to observe.

In this light, interviewing is well understood as a craft that demands great skill, purpose and poise that can only improve through practice (Seidman, 2013). Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) elaborate on this purpose of "obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena" (p. 6). However, achieving this goal is no simple feat, and the ultimate quality of an interview is largely dependent upon the interviewer's skill and ability (Patton, 2015). Successful interviewing that evokes people's stories and the meanings that can be derived from these narratives, requires a high level of rigor and dedication from the interviewer.

In order to achieve this, it is vital to appreciate the complexity in the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. For example, it must be acknowledged that the interviewer resides in a position of power in relation to the interviewer/interviewee dynamic. Managing this sensitive dynamic is important if the interviewee is to feel comfortable during the interview. Given the delicacy of this relationship, Rubin and Rubin (2012) coin the term *conversational partner* that, "conveys the respect the researcher has for the interviewee's experience and insights and emphasizes that interviewing is a joint process of discovery (p. 7). Through this lens it should be

understood that both the interviewer and interviewee are playing an active role in molding and shaping the discussion.

While it is vital to recognize the relational importance between the interviewer and interviewee through this conversational approach, it is equally essential for the researcher to effectively control this dynamic (Seidman, 2013). For example, the interviewer must be mindful of how much personal information they are sharing with the interviewee in the interest of developing a trustworthy relationship. Seidman (2013) warns, "Although such sharing may contribute to building rapport, it can also affect and even distort what the participant might have said had the interviewer not shared his or her experience" (p. 99). This is an important consideration for all researcher's engaging in qualitative interviewing. Ultimately it is useful to remember that the desire to build a relationship with the interviewee(s) can have an undesirable effect on the quality and authenticity of data being collected.

This synopsis of qualitative interviewing offered a proposal for the interviewing methods and techniques used in this study. Gleaning Rubin and Rubin's (2012) model of conversational partners, this feeds into the distinctive features of phenomenological inquiry and corresponding data collection methods that differ from other forms of qualitative research approaches. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the difference with this research design essentially falls between the gathering and analysis of the data (van Manen, 1990). It should be made clear that a phenomenological interview will not only gather lived-experience material but should also serve as an opportunity to reflect on the topic at hand (van Manen, 1990). This is crucial for hermeneutical interviewing in

particular as it proceeds to encourage interviewees to become participants and collaborators in the research by way of interpretation and reflection (van Manen, 1990).

Interview protocol. The interview questions for this study were organized and designed around the overarching research questions that guided this phenomenological inquiry. The questions were therefore structured into three broad categories. These categories were presented in a systematic approach, seeking to first explore the volunteer experiences with the AVOCA project, second their motivations for volunteering with the project and finally the impact that participants felt volunteering had on their own lives. Interview questions were therefore designed to illicit detailed responses around these three focus areas. A full list of these proposed questions along with possible follow-up questions and probes can be found in Appendix A.

In order to effectively engage the interview participants in each of these areas, it is important to explain the layers upon which the interview questions have been designed. Here I differentiate between a *phenomenological interview* and a *hermeneutical interview* and the types of questions that are positioned therein. First, the *phenomenological interview* is primarily concerned with mining for raw experiential material. van Manen (2014) makes clear that a phenomenological interview, "serves the very specific purpose of exploring and gathering experiential narrative material, stories, or anecdotes that may serve as a resource for phenomenological reflection" (p. 314). The key here is to obtain experiential accounts in pre-reflective terms (van Manen, 2014). These can also be thought of as the untouched experiences that interviewees have not yet tried to reflect on or interpret. This is no simple task, as it is much easier for an interviewee to share their

opinions and interpretations about an experience, rather than to simply share the details of an experience as it was lived through (van Manen, 2014). This is one of the complex nuances of phenomenological inquiry that serves as a pivotal step in the quality of the lived experience material. In the case of this study, concrete interview questions concerning the volunteer experience were relative to specific instances recalling a certain situation, person or event (van Manen, 1990).

These initial questions were designed to set up the subsequent interview questions that are focused on participant motivations and understandings of how volunteering has had an impact on their own lives. These types of questions fit the *hermeneutical interview* model that is more interested in the interpretation of responses. van Manen (2014) coins this the *data-interpreting* interview that, "seeks assistance in the interpretation of the empirical data (lived experience accounts) gained through phenomenological interviews, observations and other data-gathering methods" (p. 317). The key with these types of questions is to evoke reflective responses that avoid generalizations from the interviewee (van Manen, 1990). The interview questions for this study were therefore purposefully designed in a layered approach that utilized hermeneutical interviewing questions as a follow up to the initial phenomenological interview questions. This approach aimed to gather both descriptive and interpretive accounts of the volunteer experience from the participants (van Manen, 2014).

The interviews can be further characterized as semi-structured with open-ended questions consciously void of any leading questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interview questions were designed to evoke a conversational response and discussion

between the interviewer and interviewee. This type of open-ended questioning encouraged the interviewee to recall a multitude of experiences from memory. A set of sub-questions and possible probes were also prepared to help guide the interview, either by maintaining the flow of the conversation or even keeping the discussion on track. Glesne (2011) characterizes interviews of this nature organized by specified questions while allowing for flexibility in the interview, permitting the follow up of unexpected leads that may naturally emerge from the discussion (p. 134).

In an attempt to remain engaged with the interviewee and to be fully prepared in asking probing questions, note taking during the interviews was kept at a minimum (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Instead, all interviews were recorded using a digital sound recorder and transcribed verbatim shortly thereafter. This was an important feature for this research because of the cross-language conversations that were taking place. A professional interpreter qualified in Salvadorian-Spanish to English translation was hired to assist in translating questions from the researcher in English to Salvadorian-Spanish, and then responses from the interviewees in Salvadorian-Spanish to English. The interpreter in this sense was essentially mediating the conversation between the interviewer and interviewee.

It is important to acknowledge how the role of an interpreter could have an impact on the quality and content of the cross-language interviews in this study. The first obvious challenge is presented in adding an extra layer of communication that could have interrupted the flow and distorted the essence of the conversational interview. Second, this extra layer of communication between the interviewer and interviewee could have

increased the chances of certain meanings being lost in translation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). To mitigate this concern on the researcher's end, it was important to pose clear and concise interview questions that were simple yet concrete in their purpose (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Similarly, the researcher's responses to the translated words of the interviewee needed to be poised and clearly articulated. This careful consideration of my own language choice in my interview questions and follow up responses was crucial throughout this process. Additionally, the researcher met with the interpreter ahead of the interviews to explain the research project and share the interview questions before meeting with the interviewee (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Within this discussion the interpreter was encouraged to inform the researcher when or if they were having difficulty translating certain words or phrases, for example when there was no direct English equivalent (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Another method by which the meanings and translations were checked was within the transcription process. All four cross-language interviews were shared electronically with a professional translator who again specialized in Salvadorian-Spanish to English translations. This individual was similarly hired to both translate and transcribe the interviews from these recordings. In the transcription process, they listened to the interview before providing a written record of the conversation. These second pair of ears and eyes were able to point out where any miscommunication might have occurred (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The organization of these specially produced interview transcripts offered the full Salvadorian-Spanish and English translations so that the researcher could then review in English for coding purposes. These transcripts captured

every word from the recorded interviews between the interviewer, interviewee and interpreter. Key to this was the use of two separate audio recorders that were placed within range of all three participants in the interview. This measure ensured that all language was captured clearly throughout the entire interview.

Given the condensed time frame of the Holy Week program spread across ten days, an interview schedule was devised to maximize the efficiency of the data collection process. Sufficient time was allocated after the completion of the program for any follow up interviews with participants. This was to ensure enough time to ask further questions face-to-face after the conclusion of the initial interviews should any points have needed further clarification or discussion.

Observations. Unlike interviews, observations serve as an indirect data collection method contributing in understanding how we make sense of the world (Patton, 2015). Observations are also highly descriptive and are usually based upon the settings, activities and people involved in the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2015). The researcher can take on varying levels of participation when conducting observations in the field. These can be categorized along a type of spectrum known as the "participant-observer continuum" in which researchers can fall as a participant, an onlooker or a mix of both (Glesne, 2011). The researcher's perspective can also vary as an insider or an outsider to the setting and environment. This usually has an impact on whether or not the researcher engages in either overt and covert observations (Patton, 2015).

In phenomenological works, van Manen (1990) proposes *close observations* as a means to break through the distance usually created between a researcher and their

participants through traditional observational methods (p. 68). van Manen (1990) explains, “The best way to enter a person’s lifeworld is to participate in it” (p. 69). While not fully entering the participants’ lifeworld, I was entering the same space as a volunteer myself during the Holy Week program. I was therefore in a unique position in both working alongside the study’s volunteer participants as well as observing their experiences. This aligns itself with van Manen’s (1990) instruction that requires a close relation, “while retaining a hermeneutic alertness to situations that allows us to constantly step back and reflect on the meaning of those situations” (p. 69).

The ultimate purpose of close observations was to gather anecdotes resulting from the observations of situations that capture examples of participants’ lived experiences (van Manen, 1990). These anecdotes must carry with them a clear point, that is representative of a meaningful observation. It might be that anecdotal themes emerge after the researcher has collected data and gathered materials, however these anecdotes must be recognized while it is happening (van Manen, 1990). Therefore, van Manen (1990) stresses the importance of recovering living phrases and incidents, that provide an anecdote with cogency (p. 69). This can come in the form of a narrative that captures a short and simple story as a result of the researcher’s reflections and thoughts based upon what has been seen in the field (van Manen, 2014).

Field notes. As a by-product of observations, field notes are the result of capturing the researchers’ observations in written form. These field notes are often thick and rich in description and are key to the quality of the observation (Glesne, 2011). The field notes will comprise of daily observations based upon time spent in the field

observing the participants, settings, events and noteworthy interactions of value. These can also result in analytical memos that are typically a by-product of field notes found in the "margins" (Glesne, 2011). Within these notes, there will also be reflective recordings that serve the purpose of trying to capture the researcher's thought in the moment (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). These provided a valuable source of text to compliment the interview transcripts and reference during the data analysis. These notes were processed through their own form of data analysis which will be fully explained in the next section of this chapter.

Data Analysis

As a reminder to the reader, the fundamental goal of this phenomenological inquiry was to establish the essence of how participants experience and understand volunteering through the AVOCA project. The previous section highlighted the methods in place to collect the data responsible for helping to answer the guiding research questions for this study. Having successfully collected this flux of rich material, the next major step was to analyze and attempt to make meaning from the data. This approach was guided by the overarching stages of an interpretive hermeneutic circle and thematic analysis that outlined a whole-part-whole approach of systematic process and understanding. What follows next is an overview of this analytical process followed by the steps in place designed to inform the results and discussion chapters of this research.

Hermeneutical analysis. The overriding term that best describes how the data was analyzed is through an interpretive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; van Manen, 1990). An interpretive thematic analysis organizes data into themes that allows

for a detailed description and interpretation of the volunteer phenomenon. To guide this process, a combination of Paul Ricœur's proposition for a three-tiered hermeneutical thematic analysis (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009) was complimented with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage model of thematic analysis. Both models offered similar steps for analysis (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009), yet the combination of the two struck a balance between the theoretical dispositions of hermeneutical phenomenological inquiry as well as offering clear and practical steps to process the data.

Before detailing the parts for this analysis, it is worth noting some of the advantages and potential difficulties with an interpretive thematic analysis of this nature. First, this provided a flexible approach to interpreting and understanding potentially complex data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This can be appealing for young and inexperienced academics who might be setting out on their first in depth research study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While this accessibility could be attractive to the novice researcher, this can also serve as a pitfall considering the disagreement among scholars about what a thematic analysis is and how one goes about delivering one (Tuckett, 2005). It is therefore essential to construct a detailed guide as to how the thematic analysis will be conducted for this particular study.

The first part of the proposed data analysis plan leans upon the works of hermeneutical phenomenologist Paul Ricœur. Ricœur's theory of interpretation offered a framework for analysis specific to hermeneutical phenomenology (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). Before expanding on this framework, it is important to acknowledge the philosophical disposition of Ricœur's theories of hermeneutical interpretation. First,

Ricœur and Thompson (1981) outline a working definition of hermeneutics as, "the theory of the operations of understanding in their relation to the interpretation of texts" (p. 43). This is rooted in Ricœur's analysis of textual *distanciation* and *appropriation* leading towards his guide of *explanation, interpretation* and *understanding* to capture the essence of his interpretive framework (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009).

Ricœur's writings of distanciation are based upon his acknowledgment of the undeniable separation between the text on a page and the actual lived experiences of participants (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). This notion relates to the nature of research as the analysis of data alone cannot entirely recreate an event. Analysis of text does not contain the inflections of tone and nonverbal cues from participants, although these can be recorded and partially captured by way of note-taking and re-listening to interviews. However, when interpreting the experiences of participants, the researcher is dependent on the text they are inevitably going to be distanced from (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). This is also true of an audience who are now potentially interpreting this discourse by way of reading and also being distanced from the social and psychological context upon which the original discourse was being conducted (Ghasemi, Taghinejad, Kabiri, & Imani, 2011).

Ricœur additionally spoke of appropriation as something experienced by the researcher who is engaged in the interpretation of a particular phenomenon (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). Ricœur and Thompson (1981) help to define the impact of appropriation in this way: "By 'appropriation' I understand this: that the interpretation of text culminates in the self-interpretation of a subject (the interpreter) who thenceforth

understands himself better, understands himself differently, or simply begins to understand himself" (p. 158). This understanding encourages the researcher to open themselves to the possibility and likelihood of enlarging oneself based upon the interpretations and understandings of other possibilities (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). This combination of distanciation and appropriation provide a "dialectic of interpretation" and the paradigm of text interpretation that can be achieved through the implementation of Ricœur's framework of hermeneutic analysis (Ghasemi, Taghinejad, Kabiri, & Imani, 2011; Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009).

Ricœur's framework broadly contains three levels of analysis. The first level of analysis seeks to deliver an explanation of texts being analyzed (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). At this level, words are taken at face value and no attempt is made to interpret these (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). The transcripts are then re-read to ensure that no words were missed before then starting to connect key words and phrases to similar ideas and themes (Saldaña, 2013). This process will result in an explanation of the data that presents unorganized and emergent ideas from the initial screening of the data (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009).

Level two of Ricœur's interpretative framework aims for a naïve understanding of the data (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). Having started to connect initial ideas from the level one analysis into themes, the data then undergoes a second cycle iteration of analysis. Second cycle coding of this nature is deployed as a means of reorganizing and reanalyzing data that was coded in the first cycle (Saldaña, 2013). This also leads to the creation of sub-themes within a theme, further developing categories that speak to some

aspect of the subtheme (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). This naïve understanding is still largely based on the internal nature of the transcripts but also starts to include some decision making from the researcher about the similar meanings of particular words and phrases (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009).

The third and final level three analysis attempts to tie everything together resulting in an in-depth understanding of the data that was collected (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). This essentially involves the movement back and forth between the explanation and understanding of the data. This is referred to as the hermeneutic arc (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). This process is heavily informed by different areas of knowledge with the first area of knowledge counted as the experience brought forth by the researcher and their preunderstandings of the phenomenon. The second area of knowledge contributing to the explanation and understanding is of the researcher's knowledge and experience of the individuals participating in the study (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). It is a combination of these angles coupled with the data analysis that result in the in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. What follows next is a more practically detailed description of how data was analyzed step-by-step for this study by leaning upon a thematic analysis under the umbrella of Ricœur's interpretive hermeneutical framework.

Thematic analysis. The first goal in a thematic analysis is to generate themes from the data collected. Braun and Clarke (2006) define a theme as representing "some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set" (p. 10). There are several factors to consider when embarking on this process. The first is to examine what

constitutes a theme and its relevance to the research questions and overall purpose of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Relevance is not necessarily determined by pattern frequency or number of instances across the data, rather themes must be decided by the researcher who makes their best judgement (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was based on the instruments of analysis including volunteer experiences, motivations and impacts.

In order to generate these themes, the first level of analysis may begin at the initial moment of data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Particularly during interviewing, the researcher should be open to start noticing issues of potential interest and looking for patterns of meaning as soon as the data comes in (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition to this receptivity, the researcher should also take all opportunities to further familiarize themselves with their data through repeated readings and other interpretive acts such as data transcription (Bird, 2005). These combined efforts encourage a rich level of interactive rigor between the researcher and their data that will ultimately increase the likelihood of a quality analysis.

Following this data familiarization, the first formal step in the composition of themes will emerge through the production of initial codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These are features of data that seem interesting to the researcher from the interview transcripts and field notes from observations, highlighting significant statements, quotes and instances that give an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Examples of data were identified relative to the volunteer experience, motivation and impact. These served as my “units of analysis” to extract codes from my data sources (Foss & Waters, 2016). The codes were highlighted to create

an individual label containing the code itself as well as a marking of the transcript and page number. This is so that when all codes were separated it was simple to relocate them from their original data source (Foss & Waters, 2016).

This coding process is also commonly referred to as "in vivo coding" (Saldaña, 2013). In vivo coding is an inductive coding process that uses participant generated words to produce key terms or phrases naturally emerging from the transcripts (Saldaña, 2013). It was crucial to the critical nature of this research to use the words of the participants themselves rather than the words of the researcher to generate these codes (Saldaña, 2013). To add to the effectiveness of this process, it was also important to interpret interview participants' vocalizations, facial expressions, and other bodily gestures, as complimentary data collected and analyzed (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015).

Additionally, Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggest relating to the literature to suggest what codes to look for and themes to test when analyzing original data (p. 197). This advice was followed when analyzing the interview transcripts, specifically focusing on participants' motivations to volunteer and the impact that volunteering has had on their own lives. For example, I leaned upon Clary and Snyder's (1999) Volunteer Functions Inventory model (VFI) to identify codes relative to volunteer motivation. This model was previously introduced in Chapter 2 and provided six functions that capture the motivations behind why people choose to volunteer in development programs. The functionalist model of volunteering consequently served as a guide when coding the themes that emerged from the transcripts.

Elsewhere, a similar method was in place for coding volunteer impact. Also referenced in Chapter 2 was the International Volunteer Impacts Survey (IVIS) by Lough, Sherraden and McBride (2012). The IVIS contained four major ways in which volunteering had some type of impact of the participants lives. Both the VFI and IVIS models served as guides to first identify and then code possible motivations and impacts that emerged from the data. It is these primary steps of practical data coding that aligned with Ricœur's first level of naive understanding in a hermeneutical interpretive analysis.

Having initially coded the interview transcripts as well as the observations and field notes, the next phase was to search for themes in the data. This involved combing through each of the codes and sorting them into related groups that became the theme representative of those clusters of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These clusters of data formed a pile that was then be labelled with a name or phrase that best represented what was common among those codes (Foss & Waters, 2016). These labels were then reviewed once more to check that all codes are accurately represented by the label. At this point codes were moved across piles if it was determined that another coding label was more accurate (Foss & Waters, 2016).

Once codes were initially placed, they were then grouped accordingly into themes. These themes contained a series of coding labels that were counted as being similar to one another. The initial themes were then named and settled for further analysis. It was at this stage where themes were reviewed for accuracy relative to the coded data extracts and then reviewed again for validity in relation to the entire data set

(Braun & Clarke, 2006). This essentially meant identifying the essence of each theme and clearly stating what they represented from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Once the themes were identified, the researcher then created connections between them to form an explanatory schema (Foss & Waters, 2016). The schema mapped the relationships between themes as they emerged with potential for presenting different thematic hierarchies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It was recommended for the researcher to engage in this process on more than one occasion. For example, once the initial schema was designed, the researcher then recorded it and tried to re-create a different explanatory schema containing relationships that were not made the first time. This forced the researcher to think beyond the first interpretation of relationships among the themes, further solidifying the analysis (Foss & Waters, 2016).

This process also produced a group of codes that did not necessarily fit within a particular theme (Foss & Waters, 2016). Additionally, there were themes that were isolated from any clear relationship with other themes within the schema. These themes were maintained in their own group as deeper meanings and connections developed throughout the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It was this process of searching, reviewing and then defining these themes that spoke to Ricœur's second level of understanding in a hermeneutical interpretive analysis.

To achieve Ricœur's final level of appropriation, it was then necessary to conduct the final analysis and produce the write-up of the findings. The aim of this final phase was to demonstrate a deep level of understanding by way of providing a concise, coherent, logical and interesting account of the story being told by the data as it related to

each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A significant piece of this required the portrayal of a sufficient amount of evidence of the themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These supporting extracts needed to be ingrained in both an analytic and compelling fashion that goes beyond a base level description of the data and into an argument that ties directly to the research questions of this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Credibility and Trustworthiness

This section discusses the credibility and trustworthiness aspects of this study. First, this section defines the need for credibility checks and trustworthiness evidence in qualitative research as a whole. In addition, this section highlights typical measures employed to validate credibility and trustworthiness. However, given the nature of this phenomenological inquiry, a more specific conversation will address the need and implementation of such checks for this hermeneutical phenomenological research design. Throughout this discussion, this section leans upon a combination of methodological generalists and phenomenological specialists to support the credibility and trustworthiness measures for this study as they relate to credibility standards and strategies.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) explain that credibility is intimately tied with the presentation of convincing evidence (p. 226). Convincing evidence stems from the thoroughness that should be demonstrated in the methods and design section of the research (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Rubin and Rubin (2012) further explain that thoroughness is often presented by way of rich detail and description that also integrates the works of key authors and publications to support one's work (p. 226). This integration

of external publications from key authors should be a fundamental across all research endeavors as a testimonial to the credibility of the research.

It should also be well understood that researcher credibility is intimately aligned with trustworthiness as Patton (2015) explains, "trustworthiness of the data is tied directly to the trustworthiness of those who collect and analyze the data – and their demonstrated competence" (p. 706). Another such concern regarding the trustworthiness of qualitative research is focused on the objectivity of knowledge. Brinkman and Kvale (2015) acknowledge that while objectivity is an ambiguous term this measure is more focused on a freedom of bias (p. 278). This is a valid concern in most qualitative research given the potential researcher bias may have on the data analysis and interpretations (Patton, 2015). This is where the quality of the researcher epoché and their ability to bracket out their biases becomes a crucial factor in trustworthiness credibility.

Trustworthiness also pertains to the reliability of the research findings which is often determined by way of data validity (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). However, there are multiple perspectives regarding research validation and it is important to note that many terms stem from more traditional quantitative research (Creswell, 2013). Terms such as *reliability, objectivity* and *generalizability* were all borrowed from more conventional forms of positivist research upon which the quality of the study was to be judged (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). However, a host of works have been published in more recent times that propose equivalents to parallel these quantitative labels of validation (Creswell, 2013).

The emergence of postmodern and interpretive research paradigms has demanded an evolution of validation standards and strategies that relate more with qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Creswell (2013) further posits that validation for qualitative research places emphasis on the process and should fundamentally serve as, "an attempt to assess the 'accuracy' of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants" (pp. 249-250). This accuracy is rooted in the amount of time the researcher spends in the field, the detailed and thick description provided in the research report as well as the closeness of the researcher with the participants in the study (Creswell, 2013). These offer a distinctive strength of qualitative research and there are some clear validation strategies that can be used to enhance and measure these ideals.

One such way in which validity can be accounted for is through *triangulation* (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Patton, 2015). Triangulation is defined by Marshall and Rossman (2016) as, "the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point" (p. 262). For example, a research study may rely heavily upon interviewing by way of data collection but may also glean from participant observations and field notes by way of triangulating their findings (Creswell, 2013). Other methods of triangulation can include *analyst triangulation* which involves the use of multiple analysts to review the findings as well as *theoretical triangulation* that uses multiple perspectives or theories to interpret the data (Patton, 2015).

Elsewhere, Patton (2015) describes *member-checking* in qualitative research whereby the interview participants are offered the opportunity to review the, "accuracy,

completeness, fairness, and perceived validity of their data analysis" (p. 668). This is where the researcher provides summaries to the participants seeking their reactions and asking for any corrections or additional insights they might be able to offer (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The purpose is to ensure that the researcher did their best possible job at interpreting the participants' responses. These are some of the more common examples of measures qualitative researchers can adopt as validation strategies for their work.

Given the phenomenological nature of this study, there are some specific validation guidelines proposed for this type of research design. Before identifying these, there are some important factors to consider that speak to the unique nature of phenomenological inquiry as it relates to research credibility and trustworthiness. The first major consideration is proposed by van Manen (2014) who explains that a common issue for phenomenological researchers is that they are often posed questions of validity measures that do not belong to phenomenological methodology (p. 347). van Manen (2014) explicitly states, "This is especially challenging when external concepts of validation, such as, sample size, sampling selection criteria, members' checking, and empirical generalization are applied to phenomenology. These are concepts that belong to languages of different qualitative methodologies" (p. 347).

The danger here becomes when novice researchers then attempt to mix validation strategies and concepts into their work that belong to other qualitative methodologies (van Manen, 2014). This ultimately becomes problematic, leading to misinterpretations and misunderstandings of the data being collected and analyzed (van Manen, 2014). For example, van Manen (2014) states, "No predetermined procedure such as 'members'

check' or 'triangulation of multiple methods' can fulfill such demand for validating phenomenological study" (pp. 348-349). Van Manen (2014) moves to qualify this statement by admitting the importance of asking participants' whether the examples or anecdotes of their experiential accounts are resonant with their experiences (p. 348). However, he stands firm on the notion that methodical procedures that are so often used to justify validation criteria should not be applied so carelessly to phenomenological inquiry.

While van Manen (2014) argues against the cross-pollination of validation strategies across multiple strands of qualitative research, he does put forward some validation criteria that should test the validity of all phenomenological studies. These criteria hinge on the validity of a phenomenological research question, the analysis being performed on experientially descriptive accounts, the study itself being properly rooted in primary phenomenological literature and the avoidance of trying to legitimize the study within validation criteria derived from sources that are not concerned with phenomenological methodologies (pp. 350-351).

Despite the risk of being labelled as a secondary or tertiary source for phenomenological inquiry (van Manen, 2014), Creswell (2013) offers his own interpretation of these criteria as they relate to van Manen's. These criteria are similarly centered upon an understanding of phenomenology's philosophical underpinnings, a clear phenomenon of study, recommended procedures of data analysis, the conveyance of the overall essence of the participants' experience and finally the reflexive account of the researcher throughout the study (p. 260). In addition to these criteria, there are some other

processes inherent within phenomenological research design that still speak to issues of credibility and trustworthiness. The following measures were in place to address these issues for this study.

First, the nullification of researcher bias is of utmost importance in qualitative research. Phenomenological research maintains a process in which these concerns are addressed. This is commonly referred to as the *epoché* which van Manen (2014) explains, "is the critical phenomenological device that should defeat bias that occurs from unexamined assumptions, personal or systematic prejudices, closed-mindedness, and so on" (p. 354). In an attempt to reduce researcher bias based upon my own experiences, I intentionally included a significant section on myself as researcher in the introductory chapter of this study. This process also helped me in bracketing out any of my own predispositions about the research (van Manen, 2014). Throughout the coding process, I was continually aware of these predispositions and constantly remained open to being led in any direction the findings were naturally leading me.

Second, this study holds two strands of triangulation methods focused on data sources and theories (Creswell, 2013). While face-to-face interviews serve as the primary means of data collection, a combination of observations and field notes also contributed significant sources of information. Theoretical triangulation was also considered with a combination of critical theories forming the theoretical bricolage guiding this study. Combined, these different types of triangulation involve corroborating evidence from different data sources and perspectives that adds validity to the research findings.

Third, this study is also adopted a form of peer review as a validation strategy. This informal review was conducted by a research colleague who provided an external check of the research process (Creswell, 2013). This was someone who asked questions about the methods of data collection and analysis as well as the interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2013). This particular researcher also had experience volunteering in the AVOCA project adding to their credibility as a peer reviewer. This allowed for detailed conversations between the researcher and peer-reviewer in the specific context of the AVOCA project.

Finally, the research participants for this study were each sent a narrative account of their interview transcripts as a form of member-checking. Crowther et al., (2017) describe this process as crafting stories that derive narrative from transcript (p. 826). Essentially the verbatim transcript is shortened and edited into narrative form for the participant to read. This narrated version of the interview transcript included the key areas of conversation that were being used for further analysis, providing glimpses and drawing attention to meanings within the phenomena (Crowther et al., 2017). This gave an opportunity for the participant to check their own responses to the interview questions in a far more interesting way, free from the unattractive language recorded in a verbatim transcript. This procedure was followed for all interview transcripts, meaning Salvadorian-Spanish versions were translated from English for the benefit of the Spanish speaking participants. Crowther et al., (2017) maintains this process is both an acceptable and trustworthy methodological device aligned with the philosophical notions of hermeneutical phenomenology.

In summary, a combination of four credibility and trustworthiness techniques were employed for this study. These included my own personal researcher epoché (bracketing), data collection and theoretical triangulation, peer-review debriefing as well as the participant creative narratives. The following section builds on these measures by outlining the potential limitations of this study and the steps that were in place to mitigate these as best as possible.

Limitations

The most significant limitation to consider with this study was the language barrier between the researcher and some of the study participants. Of the local volunteers to be interviewed, four of the participants did not speak English. Rubin and Rubin (2012) expand on this limitation, "The core issue is that literal, word-for-word translations often miss the underlying cultural concepts" (p. 185-186). Furthermore, a word might be translated but could possibly have two different culturally linguistic meanings (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). While this has potential implications for the interviewee's responses, this also has an impact on the planning of interview questions. My own personal use of the English language needed to be clear and concise, while not oversimplifying the strength of the question (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

In order to limit any meanings lost in translation for these interviews, I required the assistance of a bilingual translator available to mediate these conversations. However, it is important to remember how this may have still presented some challenges. For example, Rubin and Rubin (2012) further explain that it can be difficult for the interpreter to sometimes identify the nuance in a question, having a knock-on effect for the

researcher to plan follow up questions (p. 186). It is important to re-state that these interviews were recorded in full and sent to a qualified, professional Salvadorian/Spanish translator, to both translate and transcribe these interviews into English transcripts. This professional translator/transcriber provided a second pair of ears for the interview and further helped the researcher to understand any important moments in the interview that may have been originally missed.

An additional limitation in the methodological aspect of this research stems from my relationships with the research participants. It can be an advantage that the participants have a personal relationship with me since this potentially increased the level of trust between the researcher and participant (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). However, these relationships can also cause difficulty, especially if the participants treat the interview process with casualty and do not take their participation seriously. This can hinder the quality and thoughtfulness of responses to the interview questions (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). Participants were therefore reminded that their participation in this study was crucial to the betterment of the AVOCA project and their responses were key in aiding this goal.

Another such potential limitation for the methodological element to this study was the possible time constraints that could have been faced in the field. Given the small window of time available to collect this data, it was possible that the amount and quality of data may have been at risk of being captured. In order to mitigate this risk, a detailed data collection plan was made with pre-scheduled interview timings. A small window of space was set aside in the event of needing to cancel or reschedule interviews. Flexibility

was also needed outside of the scheduled hours at the stadium in order to capture all of the desired interviews.

Summary

This qualitative research adopted a hermeneutical phenomenology as the research design best suited to answer the questions posed by this study. In order to develop an interpretation and understanding of the essence of volunteerism in the AVOCA project, ten participants were interviewed about their volunteer experiences and understandings. This research used phenomenological interviewing as the primary data collection technique. Observations as a participant observer and field notes were also recorded and collected from time spent in the field of study.

Upon collecting this data, key principles of the hermeneutical circle were employed in an attempt to make sense of the data. This consisted of a thematic analysis to identify codes that naturally emerged from the data. From these codes, themes and sub-themes were formed upon which the results and discussion chapters of this study were formulated. Finally within this section, possible concerns regarding credibility and trustworthiness were addressed as well as the potential limitations of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted to understand the experiences of volunteers participating in the AVOCA project's Holy Week program. To explore this phenomenon, this study posed the following primary question: How do participants experience and understand their role as volunteers in the AVOCA project? To further define this study, a secondary set of guiding questions were also asked: What have been the participants' experiences as volunteers in the program? What motivates the participants to volunteer in the program? What has been the impact on the lives of the participants through volunteering for the program? This chapter will therefore present the results to the above questions primarily based on the responses of ten volunteers from AVOCA, as well as the observations and field notes from myself as participant-researcher.

Based on these findings, this chapter will attempt to weave together a breadth of rich coded data to present a narrative portraying the essence of volunteering in the AVOCA project. The experiences of the participants interviewed for this study stem from multiple years of involvement as a volunteer. For the local Salvadorian participants, their time spent volunteering spans the entire year with continuous work in their respective communities. Whereas for the international participants, their volunteering primarily occurs by travelling to participate in the Holy Week program during the Easter Holidays. The participants in this study are therefore gleaning upon multiple years of volunteering for the AVOCA project and not simply discussing this single year in which this data was

being collected. It is these collective experiences from both the local and international volunteers that have formed the results of this study.

Overall the data demonstrated an experience of volunteering for the AVOCA project as a transformational journey across three distinct phases. This volunteer journey has been organized by a series of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data coding and analyses processes detailed in the previous chapter. The major themes reflect three key parts of the volunteer experience which have been labelled: the *investment, connection* and *commitment* phases. Additional sub-themes are presented that explicate this journey within each phase. Some sub-themes will also be further supported by additional categories. Each section is supported by original data extracts from the participants' interview transcripts. As a reminder to the reader, pseudonyms have been employed to protect the identity of the research participants involved in the study.

Phase One - Investment

This first phase in the volunteer journey presents how participants experienced and understood their roles as volunteers before actively participating in the program. This phase captures time spent in the build-up to AVOCA's annual Holy Week program in El Salvador. For the international volunteers, this includes their experience while still located in their own countries before leaving their homes and travelling to El Salvador. For the local participants, this includes their experience as a volunteer in their own communities before coming together with the international volunteers for the Holy Week.

This section will open with a brief introduction of each interview participant, including how each volunteer became involved in the AVOCA project. It is important to

develop an initial understanding of the interview participants' various backgrounds before detailing the first themes that emerged. These brief narratives offer additional context relative to each participants' story that will add to the richness of data being presented throughout this chapter. The following sections will then elaborate on some of the roles and responsibilities involved in the planning and preparation for this volunteering experience. The feelings and emotions volunteers experience ahead of the project itself will also be presented along with the challenges and difficulties that are faced. Finally, this section will also unearth some of the motivations during the phase of the volunteer journey.

AVOCA invitation. Becoming involved in the AVOCA project required an invitation. Each of the participants spoke of an invitation to join the project by way of some mutual connection. These connections were either to the project directly or to another volunteer who had previously participated. The most popular connection of all was to Father Peter O'Neil – the priest whose idea started the AVOCA project ten years ago. Following is a short profile for each of the volunteers that shares the stories of how they became involved in the program. These profiles are not presented in any particular order of importance other than alphabetical ordering of their pseudonym.

Alejandro is a local Salvadorian volunteer who started participating in 2013. He has since been a volunteer for the program each Holy Week and also volunteers weekly in his own community's soccer school for youth. Alejandro was invited to participate in the program by a former volunteer from his own community "Don Pedro" as he explains,

> I remember, the first contact that we had with him (Don Pedro) was there in Soyapango, on the pitch at El Famoso. That's where he told me about AVOCA, not a lot of information, but that it was for coaches and I was interested.

He found himself interested in the project because he was a big soccer enthusiast and had an interest in coaching young people. Additionally, he was aware of the benefits of the program and decided it was something he also wanted to participate into help within his own community.

Andrew is English born and his involvement with the AVOCA project stems from the very beginning. Andrew shares,

> I am a family member of the charity, so there has always been a connection over the last 20 years and it was through a conversation in 2007 that the idea of the football project came about. It has been a big part of my life I suppose.

The conversation Andrew referenced above was with Father Peter, who served as a priest in one of the communities in Soyapango. It was Father Peter's idea to start the AVOCA Holy Week program by offering soccer camps for children in the communities he served. This is essentially where the program was born and this idea was first initiated with Andrew and another international volunteer - Stewart.

Diego is the youngest volunteer in this research study, Diego initially took part in AVOCA's Holy Week program as a youth participant. However, by the age of 17 Diego followed in the footsteps of his father in wanting to participate as a volunteer coach. He explains, "Now I'm more interested in making the kids happy, like the experience I had, I try to also share that with them so that they will feel what I felt, maybe the first time I did

it." Diego now coaches regularly each week throughout the year in his community's soccer school on behalf of AVOCA. Additionally, Diego is a university student and he also coaches professionally for another soccer organization in El Salvador.

Mateo is one of the most senior volunteers with the AVOCA project. His involvement in the program also stems from the beginning. Mateo lived in the same community as Father Peter and he was among the first local coaches asked to volunteer their time for the program. He was already seen as a leader in his community and regularly volunteered his time to coach soccer to the youth. Mateo explains his long-standing commitment to volunteering in his community, "I keep going because I always have the same mission from the start, to keep the kids away from trouble." His involvement in the program has continued each year and he also leads the soccer school in his own community every week of the year.

Nicolas was also a resident in the same community as Father Peter. However, his initial involvement in the program was as a translator. He was asked to support the international volunteers during the first ever Holy Week program. Nicolas mediated all conversations between the international volunteers and Salvadorian participants throughout the entire week. His role has continued in a similar fashion as the years have gone on with the help and support of other translators as the program has grown. Now Nicolas is a leading figure on AVOCA's committee group and plays a pivotal role in the planning and organization of the Holy Week program in more recent years.

Ralph is one of two American volunteers interviewed for this study. A student and youth soccer player, Ralph shares,

> I got involved in the AVOCA project through my coach that I grew up playing with in my youth program. My coach had participated with AVOCA two years before and I kind of wanted to do something similar. So, one night after practice I was like 'hey I've seen that you go to El Salvador and I've seen some pictures and see that you really enjoy it' and I wanted a chance to do it.

After this initial conversation, Ralph first came out to participate as a volunteer in the program in 2016 and has been volunteering for the program for three consecutive years.

Santiago was another one of the first local Salvadorian coaches asked directly by Father Peter to volunteer for the AVOCA project. Since 2008, he has also taken on the responsibility of leading the soccer school in his own community with weekly coaching sessions throughout the year. He also plays soccer in the Salvadorian professional leagues and is also a professional youth soccer coach. Santiago explains his involvement,

> Because I am a believer in God, a person of faith, of hope, who believes that the day I die, God will ask me, 'and what did you do with this ability, with this talent that I gave you?' So I try to put that into practice.

Sebastian is the final local Salvadorian volunteer interviewed in this study. Both Sebastian and Santiago live in the same community. Like the other local volunteers, Sebastian shares,

> We got involved with Father Peter O'Neill the Irish priest of the parish in our community. As a community we had formed a committee and he saw that we were already there for the youth. We identified the social situation that you see here in this country, so as a community we started to act. We wanted to help the

> youth, so they would stay busy and not thinking about other things. So, Father Peter saw that and said that he would bring some friends from England here to El Salvador.

Sebastian is a central figure in his community and has a history of helping to organize a multitude of events for the youth. While Sebastian does not coach often, he still serves as a conduit between the AVOCA project's leaders and the people of his community.

Stewart was among the very first international volunteers to participate in the AVOCA project. Having travelled to El Salvador for the first time with Andrew, Stewart recalls,

> I became involved in the AVOCA project through a good friend of mine for over 25 years, Andrew, who ten and a half years ago called me and said, 'Do you know where El Salvador is?' and I said, 'I haven't got a clue mate, why?' And he said, 'well we're going there at Easter to coach some football.' So in a nutshell that's how I got involved.

Stewart resides in England and works as a school teacher. He also works as a youth scout for a professional soccer team. He has participated in the program for multiple years and has frequently returned to the country for vacations outside of the AVOCA project.

Tommy is the second American volunteer interviewed in this research. Tommy studies alongside Ralph and they both played for the same youth soccer team. Similar to Ralph, Tommy shares how he became involved in the AVOCA project,

> At my senior year in high school, so 18, our coach invited me and Ralph. I think he saw our leadership skills and I think he saw we were maybe mature enough to

> handle what happens here and he invited us to come out here with him and that was three years ago so.

Both Ralph and Tommy have continued their participation together with AVOCA for three consecutive years.

The purpose of these brief introductions was two-fold. First to share how each of the volunteers in this study became involved with the AVOCA project. The second was to provide some personal context to the study participants as the reader proceeds through the narrative to follow. Now the research participants have been introduced, the following sections unpack their experiences, starting with the first investment phase in preparation for the Holy Week program.

Planning and preparations. For all volunteers there was some degree of planning and preparation involved ahead of the Holy Week program. For the international volunteers, a significant amount of time is dedicated to both raising money for the program as well as seeking donations of soccer uniforms to take for the youth participants. As one of the main organizers of the project, Andrew describes the multiple areas in which some preparation must take place,

> Initially I am talking to existing and prospective volunteers for the trip and then exploring how they might participate in the program. Then there is all the logistical parts of the project. Accommodation, transport, equipment and then ensuring things like safety, briefing volunteers, ensuring they have got insurance, so we have everyone protected as best we can.

Not all volunteers reported this level of preparation. Instead, some volunteers focused their efforts on fundraising for equipment and donations to take with them to El Salvador. Ralph further explained this process,

> We start about six months prior to the trip by raising money through different booster projects and we also throw different booster flyers out to all the local clubs, especially to ones that have contributed big time in the past. We started working on collecting cleats from them preparing bags to bring to them donations to give.

Organizing donations was a trend across all international volunteers. These donations are one of the biggest responsibilities that international volunteers are asked by the organizers of the AVOCA project. Along with the donations, international volunteers are also encouraged to fundraise for the trip. These funds contributed towards travel costs and accommodation expenses while in El Salvador.

Elsewhere, a slightly different level of preparation and planning is demonstrated by the local volunteers in El Salvador. While less focus is placed upon seeking and collecting uniform donations, they are still making plans for the project while on the ground in El Salvador. Diego shares some of his responsibilities in preparation for the Holy Week,

> We start about a month before because for example the shirts have to be done ahead of time, the stadium has to be reserved a month before so that no one else reserves it. The minibus, in this case the car that they use, has to be told as well

ahead of time so that the guy isn't booked already during this week. Almost a month, about a month more or less.

These descriptions help to define the major pieces of organization that go into the running of the Holy Week program. Both sets of volunteers will participate in various forms of planning and preparation some months before actually participating in the program. These plans are all communicated via social media messaging groups set-up for the committee members and other volunteers. There are some differences between these roles with a greater focus for the international volunteers on fundraising and donations while the local volunteers seem more focused on the logistics of the week. Either way, this organization requires a level of engagement and commitment long before physically participating in the program.

Participants reported clear distinctions between the international volunteers and the local volunteers in the amount of time they spend volunteering for AVOCA ahead of the Holy Week program. For example, most of the international volunteers acknowledge their involvement may include some planning and preparation before the trip, but the bulk of their time spent volunteering is when they are physically in El Salvador limited to the one week. However, for the local Salvadorian coaches, their commitment to their communities involves year-round volunteering. This includes weekly coaching in their own communities as well as tournaments and games at the weekends. The differences in this volunteer dynamic are captured by Stuart who summarizes,

> I also think for them [the local volunteers] it's perhaps an even bigger thing, certainly with carrying it on week in and week out. Whereas for us it's just giving up a week of our lives every year and just coming out and having fun in the sun!

Anticipation and excitement. Volunteers reported different emotional responses to how they felt in the buildup to the Holy Week program. Among the local Salvadorian volunteers there was a great sense of anticipation at the expectation of the international volunteers' arrival. The local volunteers referred to this anticipation as a time of "excited waiting." This feeling goes beyond the local volunteers themselves and extends throughout all the communities who excitedly waited for the Holy Week program throughout the year. Alejandro describes the feeling within his own community,

> The kids and the colonia, the whole community knows about the AVOCA project, and they like it, they are waiting for it. These kids in the whole community where we live, they know, and they wait on this like in December.

The sense of anticipation and waiting for the AVOCA project is likened to the sentiment and excitement felt by young children waiting for Christmas.

It is important to reemphasize that year-round activities are still taking place in each of the communities. Regular weekly practices and tournaments for some of the community's teams are scheduled throughout the year. It is the local Salvadorian volunteers themselves that organize and lead these activities. Diego explains this position for his own community,

> During the whole year, the other coaches, the most involved ones, are waiting, and training with the kids so that when the week comes that they [international

> volunteers] are coming, and then after that we keep working, so we are working the whole year round.

In this light, the local volunteers often refer to the Holy Week program as an incentive for the youth to participate in the weekly training activities throughout the whole year. Specifically, it is regarded as an event for celebration and a reward for the kids' commitment and participation throughout the year. This incentive and reward of participating in the Holy Week program is felt by both the local volunteer coaches as well as the youth participants.

The excitement generated around the arrival of the international volunteers for the Holy Week program was well understood by some of the international volunteers themselves. Stuart shares his understandings of how the local volunteers and youth participants feel in anticipation of the Holy Week,

> They tell us that they wait all year for us and it becomes a real positive event for them to look forward to and they kind of cross off the months on the calendar and the weeks on the calendar and they count down the days. Whether that's to make us feel good I don't know. It probably is true knowing this country.

It became clear that the Holy Week program was perceived as the highlight of the AVOCA project with all participants greatly looking forward to participating.

The feelings of the international volunteers reflected a similar frame of excitement. However, this excitement was only typically felt after the international volunteers had already had at least one experience participating in the program. Otherwise for their first ever trip to El Salvador, the international volunteers reported

different emotions. Their first experience is partially filled with uncertainty as well as excitement. Even after the first trip to the country, there was still a balance between this excitement and uncertainty as described by Andrew, "There's always excitement but there's always a little fear involved and the fear centers around a sense of responsibility for the volunteers." While Andrew's fears were centered on a sense of responsibility for the others, alternative uncertainties were revealed by some of the other participants.

Uncertainties of first trip. For the international volunteers, there were mixed responses between feelings of nervousness and uncertainty when reflecting on their emotions heading into their first ever trip to El Salvador with AVOCA. It seemed that much of this nervousness stemmed from the volunteers own understandings of the country they were soon to visit, mostly informed by mainstream media outlets and their own research. Tommy recalls,

> I was nervous especially when I first came. It was on the news of how bad El Salvador was. My parents weren't the happiest or not to say they weren't the happiest, but they were nervous as anybody would be going blind and having no idea what it is like.

Similar remarks were made by Stewart who remembers,

> The overriding question all the time was how the hell am I going to explain this to my Mum? Because I didn't tell her until about two months before going. It was kind of 'how am I going to explain this to people that love and care about me'?

This internal conflict of emotions was compounded by the negative media portrayals of the country, overwhelmingly presenting El Salvador as a country of great

danger. Stewart further recalls how this influenced him, “I went on to Google and typed in El Salvador and all sorts of bad news stories came up and it was murder, murder, murder.” Similar remarks of the negative media portrayal were again made by Tommy who explained, “They make it seem like every kid is part of the gangs or every kid is bad and every kid that talks to you is trying to scheme you out of things or set you up.” This type of information being fed to the volunteers before their first trip to El Salvador seems to have had an influence on their feelings of apprehension before embarking on their first journey to El Salvador.

Danger and threats. All volunteers acknowledged the danger and threats that are faced when volunteering for the AVOCA project. Whether this was for their first experience travelling to El Salvador or recurring visits, these dangers were felt the most by the international volunteers in the days leading up to their trip. Some volunteers recalled the conversations with their friends who tried to understand why they chose to participate despite the potential dangers. Tommy shared, “When I talk to my friends they’re like, ‘well why do you go back what’s the purpose?’ You’ll get shot or something is going to happen.” These conversations created pressure for the international volunteers, challenging their choice to participate in the project.

Similar remarks were shared by Ralph when remembering another conversation with his friends back in the United States, “I try to tell my friends and they’re like ‘dude why are you going to the murder capital of the world’?” These interactions usually came from family members and peers, which contributed to the international volunteers’ feelings of uncertainty and fear about their participation in the program. These types of

warnings coming from the people they loved and respected added to some of the pressures they faced in deciding to volunteer for the AVOCA project.

While the international volunteers admitted the negative perceptions of El Salvador were media driven, there were some devastating incidents that impacted all participants in the project. Stewart recalled,

> I remember when Malcolm (another volunteer in the project) was killed as it was actually the night before I flew out to El Salvador. I remember literally just going to bed and thinking I am going to check my phone before I go to sleep. Then there was a message from Sergio saying, 'Malcolm has been shot dead'. So I spent the next hour trying to work out why and what happened and I'm actually lying in my bed wondering whether I should be going because it was the first time that someone close to the project had been shot.

This loss of life was the first time in which a popular figure in the AVOCA project had been killed. This was an individual who was a leader in their community and organized his community's soccer school program. This tragic occurrence caused a shock among all members related to the program that could be felt across all volunteers in the project.

Sadly, this was not the only occasion when a volunteer with AVOCA was killed. Stewart again admitted,

> Emotionally I have gone from scared to proud to devastation with Malcolm and Andres. When Andres was killed I felt timid again because I was connected with him and I wondered if I would be seen as one and the same just because I was

always with him and am I the same problem? Would I be in danger? So certainly the year that he was killed was a big worry.

This incident caused another shock among the AVOCA volunteers. Once again this was a member of the Salvadorian volunteer group who was influential in the organization of the Holy Week program for several years. He was someone who chaperoned the international volunteers and became someone that was greatly liked, respected, and considered a friend to many. Stewart had developed a particularly close friendship with this volunteer having travelled to El Salvador outside of the Holy Week program and was often hosted by this person in their community. Andres' death then caused a flurry of doubt in Stuart's mind as to his own safety in the country.

Given these catastrophic losses of life, a ripple effect was felt by the international volunteers. Perceived danger was no longer abstracted from the distance of a news screen. On both occasions Stewart seriously doubted and reconsidered his travel plans due to concerns for his own safety. Similar doubts surfaced for the other international volunteers as to whether or not it would be safe for them to participate in the program during each of these years in which local volunteers had been killed. Despite this loss of life so close to the AVOCA project, none of the international volunteers reported not participating one year due to these incidents.

Motivations for volunteering. All participants expressed a range of motivations to volunteer for the AVOCA project in their interviews. These motivations broadly demonstrated desires to help and serve others. These were further expressed in both general notions of wanting to make an impact on the lives of young people through sport

and development as well as wanting to serve the communities as a whole. Some personal motivations also inspired the will to volunteer based on the participants' own life experiences.

Desire to help. When assessing the motivations to participate as a volunteer in the AVOCA project, the majority of responses spoke to the desire to wanting to help and give. While these ideas were similar among both sets of volunteers, there was some nuance in how the volunteers expressed their motivations. As one of the local Salvadorian volunteers, Santiago explained, "I have always liked to be a helpful person. I believe the talent God gives us should be used for the service of others." Santiago framed his desires to help others by way of serving God. Diego also believed he is in a position to help others in his community, "I had needs when I was young and so today, since I can help, I can do it." These positions come from the volunteers' perceived ability to help others in their communities. They felt it was their duty to serve based upon their position in the world today.

This contrasted slightly with some of the ways in which international volunteers described their motivations. While there was still the desire to help others, additional comments spoke to the idea of "giving back" and helping people who are perhaps "less fortunate." For example, when detailing the inception of his own motivations to help and give to others, Andrew explained, "my values certainly come from my parents and my grandparents who would have done much the same thing, looking after people maybe less fortunate, whoever they may be wherever they may be." Despite both sets of volunteers

signaling a desire to help others, the motivations for doing so stem from two contrasting places.

An opportunity. It was clear to the all participants the experience of volunteering also presented an opportunity for themselves. Alejandro confirmed, "it's an opportunity that they [AVOCA] are giving me to be a volunteer and I take maximum advantage of it." These opportunities result in a chance to gain more experiences from coaching that Alejandro further explained, "has helped me a lot because it gives me more credibility to the work that I do." In turn this has helped Alejandro build his professional CV. Other local volunteers also appreciated the diplomas awarded after completion of the coaching education element of the program. The diploma added to the volunteers' qualifications and coaching experience which was appreciated for their personal growth.

More local volunteers expressed similar types of motivations relative to skill building and opportunities for enhancement. In particular the local volunteers believed they could learn from the international volunteers themselves, as ideas are being shared specific to soccer coaching and teaching techniques for young people. Aside from the coaching experience, some local volunteers acknowledged the interactions with the international volunteers as an opportunity to learn English. This was something highly valued in El Salvador as the English language created opportunities in Salvadorian the job market.

The international volunteers also referenced their participation as an opportunity to learn. However, their learnings were more focused on the opportunity to learn about another country and its culture. Rather than being skilled based, the motivation to

volunteer was focused on broadening social understandings beyond life experiences at home. For example, in explaining his motivations for wanting to first participate in the AVOCA project, Ralph stated, "I had always had an interest in how Central American communities work." Similarly, when sharing ideas about the learning opportunities for the international volunteers, Andrew listed, "opportunities to learn about culture, the country's history and language." This curiosity about another country and culture demonstrated a contrast between the volunteers' motivations between skill enhancement and cultural awareness raising.

Personal circumstances. Some of the volunteers spoke passionately about how their own life experiences played a key role in their motivations to participate in the AVOCA project. These personal narratives presented contrasting reasons between the international volunteers and local volunteers' motivations to participate. For example, Andrew told of his family's connection with the AVOCA project spanning the past 20 years. His motivation to first volunteer for the program was fueled by a "need for something different" in his own life and the experiences he had accumulated in El Salvador up to this time. Andrew's participation continued since the beginning but admitted now feeling a "sense of obligation" to the people in the program.

Another international volunteer, Stewart, also referenced a need for something different in his own life that led to his first involvement in the AVOCA project. Stewart referenced the empty feelings in his existence at home before becoming a volunteer with AVOCA. He described being someone who was "going through the motions" in his daily life and doing the "same old boring things." He believed the opportunity to volunteer for

AVOCA presented him with a challenge and new direction that could "fill the void" in his own life. The personal motivations then reflected a need for something they felt they were missing from their lives in their home country.

Alternatively, the Salvadorian volunteers referenced a lack of opportunity available to them when they were younger. This motivated them to participate as volunteers in the program. Santiago shared some of his story,

> Well in my case, my Dad died when I was nine years old and my Mom had to immigrate to the United States. A lot of times I had to make decisions and they were wrong because I didn't have anyone to guide me, a person to advise me, and say, follow this path.

Santiago believed if similar volunteers had been present in his life when he was younger, he would have made better decisions during his youth that might have impacted his life differently. This was a strong motivation for Santiago to volunteer his time for the youth in his community. He identified similar issues and challenges for the youth today that he faced when he was younger. Ultimately, he felt he was well positioned to understand the young people and guide them based on his own experiences dealing with adversity.

A similar narrative was expressed by Mateo who also referenced his own beginnings as a reason for his motivation to participate as a volunteer in the program,

> Really it would be the complete opposite of my own start. Nobody helped me. It would have been very important to have someone to help me. But I help them [the youth] so that they don't experience the same things, right, that I experienced.

Both Mateo and Santiago clearly linked their motivation to volunteer with their own upbringings. This was a common occurrence for the majority of the Salvadorian volunteers. The absence of sufficient role models in their own lives motivated them to adopt leadership roles in their own communities.

Both sets of volunteers demonstrated a contrast in how their own life experiences spurned a motivation to participate as a volunteer for AVOCA. The international volunteers referenced the desire to volunteer because it presented an opportunity for something different in their lives, while the local Salvadorian volunteers referenced their own youth experiences as a reason to help others they liken to themselves.

Phase Two – Connection

This first investment phase of the volunteer journey serves as the precursor before the volunteers meet in El Salvador. What follows next is the connection phase of the volunteer journey. Key to this connection phase is the volunteers' participation in the Holy Week program. The activities during this holiday week are regarded as the main event that brings together the local Salvadorian volunteers and the youth participants from the different participating communities. This is also the time when the international volunteers travel from their own countries to participate in the program. The following results section reveals some of the key sub-themes to emerge from this phase of the volunteer journey. In addition to the volunteers' interviews, this was also a time in which the participant-researcher's observations and field notes were recorded.

The first factor to consider during the connection phase of the volunteer journey is the various roles and responsibilities of the volunteers throughout the week. Next the

volunteers shared some of the emotions that were experienced during their participation in the program. Some of the volunteers also talked about the difficulties, challenges and sacrifice that came with their participation. The international volunteers also reflected on the overall experience of the week as an enjoyable and positive cultural encounter. The final sub-theme that emerged stemmed from direct observations from the participant researcher that revealed instances of discriminatory behaviors. All of these sub-themes will be further presented in the sections to follow.

Roles and responsibilities. The organization of the Holy Week program was split between different members of the volunteer group. As previously mentioned, some of the responsibilities for the volunteers started at least one month prior to the Holy Week program. This included the organization of the t-shirts for all participants, reserving the stadium with the field and classroom spaces, transportation for the youth participants from some of the communities and occasionally some food at certain times during the week. While the majority of this organization was handled before the week of the program, the volunteers were still responsible for any moving parts in the organization throughout the week.

In previous years, the logistical organization of the Holy Week program was mainly coordinated by the core group of international volunteers that have been involved in the program since its inception. More recently both Andrew and Stewart explained the responsibilities are now "more shared" and their role is now more as a "facilitator." This has resulted in a greater responsibility and involvement for some of the local Salvadorian

volunteers in the organization of the program. This increased responsibility was expressed by Mateo who commented,

> My role has changed from what it was years ago because now I get more involved with the organization. Instead of just being a coach like before, on the outside, I'm together with them doing everything practically and not just coaching.

Similar responses were shared by other Salvadorian volunteers who have experienced an increased involvement in the coordination of the program over the years. This involvement now extends beyond the soccer field to other areas of the program some weeks and months before the Holy Week.

On the field, most of the volunteers were fully engaged in coaching the youth participants throughout the entire week. This involved preparing the fields early in the morning, delivering coaching sessions all day long and then packing everything away again ready to return the next day and repeat the process. This was a shared responsibility between all volunteers. However, for the international volunteers, there was less focus on the physical preparations of the field and more focus on the content they were delivering. This was also the case because the international volunteer party seldom made an on-time appearance at the fields, allowing sufficient time to help setting up the activities before the youth participants arrived.

For the international volunteers, the majority of the week was spent in preparation for the Holy Week program activities, travelling to and from the stadium and actively participating in the program's activities throughout the day. However, there were also multiple opportunities for some travel and sightseeing during the trip. For example, on

the first day, the volunteer group travelled to a main beach resort. At this time the volunteer group comprised the majority of international volunteers and some local Salvadorian volunteers. The group toured the resort and enjoyed a meal together at a beach-side restaurant before visiting one of the local Salvadorian volunteer's houses in another resort. The afternoon was spent relaxing by the private swimming pool before walking to the resort's private club. While some of the volunteers enjoyed an alcoholic beverage admiring the ocean view from the cliff-top bar, one of the international volunteers remarked, "I definitely feel like I'm on holiday now!"

The international volunteer group also enjoyed multiple evenings dining together at several different restaurants throughout the week. Occasionally the international volunteers were joined by some of the more senior members of the local volunteer group. Oftentimes, volunteers had the opportunity to go swimming in the evenings in the pool of the house they were staying. Some of the volunteers frequently engaged in the consumption of alcohol in the evenings to the point of intoxication. On the third day of the trip, the volunteer group was travelling out to the stadium for the first day of the soccer camps with the youth participation. Ralph was on a phone call with his mother and proceeded to recall all the things the group had done together since their arrival. None of these activities involved any work related tasks for the program to which Andrew jokingly commented "we have been working as well!" to Ralph's mother on the phone.

When asked about their roles in the program, the international volunteers expressed more of a focus on the coaching education and delivery of practical sessions for the youth. Ralph summarized his purpose with these trainings as giving the

Salvadorian coaches “ideas to bring back to their communities”, referring to the specific drills and activities being delivered that can be implemented throughout the year. Tommy also shared his views on the benefits of the trainings he delivered throughout the week, “these coaches come from not really knowing with no certification, they’re just kind of winging it off the spirit of their back and we come in and we give them proper knowledge.”

Coaching the youth participants was the primary contribution made by most volunteers in the program. However, there were some volunteers who had slightly different roles. For example, in his role as one of the lead organizer’s, Andrew decided to take a “step back from coaching” while Stewart admitted that he was “not keen on coaching anymore.” Instead they positioned themselves as coordinators overseeing the general organization of the program. Other international volunteers had limited involvement in coaching on the field and instead attempted to help with the day-to-day operations of the program. Examples included organizing the uniform donations, contributing to meal preparations and photography on the field.

While it appeared the international volunteers demonstrated a limited capacity in their tasks and responsibilities each day, the local volunteers assumed more roles in the coordination of the week’s activities. They were pivotal in all elements of the program from the smaller details of counting out the training equipment for the sessions and the maneuvering of goal posts on the field, to the supervision of over 200 children safely moving between the stadium and their respective communities. There appeared to be a

substantial difference between the roles and responsibilities of the international volunteers and local volunteers throughout the week.

Feeling welcomed. For the international volunteers, there was an overwhelming feeling of being welcomed to the country by the communities that participated in the Holy Week program. The international volunteers consistently referenced the warmth they felt and the happiness they noticed from the local Salvadorian people. All of the international volunteers referenced this happiness and the smiles on the faces of the Salvadorian people. Tommy observed, "these people have come from relatively nothing and they're still happy, they still have a smile on their face." This happy spirit was also detected by Andrew who explained, "materially they probably have less than us but we have never met happier and generous people. What little they have they are willing to share with you unconditionally."

These observations fed into feelings of warmth reported by the international volunteers. They felt welcomed from the very first time they participated in the program as Ralph remembered,

> It was my first time being in a different totally different culture and feeling like I have to fit in, so it was a little nerve racking. Once you got out here and got on the field it kind of all went away. It's funny because it all happened in just a matter of days. At first I was nervous but you got welcomed right away here.

Similar to Ralph, Andrew elaborated on the feelings he experienced, "there is some sort of energy, something happens that is not very tangible but that you know is a warm internal feeling that just lifts you and it creates a positive mood."

These feelings of warmth and being unconditionally welcomed by the communities evoked a strong sense of comfort among the international volunteers from the moment they arrived in the country, either for their first trip or upon their return.

Another of the international volunteers, Stewart, recalled one of his first times travelling to El Salvador and described the scene when arriving at the airport in San Salvador,

> It must have been around 10:30 or 11 o'clock at night and I remember the initial smells, the noise and the smiley faces at the airport. There must have been about 20-30 people with Union Jacks and an Irish flag just waiting for us and a big cheer as we came out of the airport.

This is typically the first time the warmth is felt by the international volunteers. The airport in the capital of San Salvador revealed itself as a symbolic moment during the trip. The first arrival to the country captured the initial meetings between the international volunteers and some of the local Salvadorian volunteers. For some of the international volunteers, this was their first encounter with the Salvadorian people. For others this was an occasion of being reunited after one or more years apart.

Celebrity treatment. From the moment they first land in El Salvador, the international volunteers experienced a high amount of attention almost everywhere they went. This was particularly evident when at the stadium delivering the soccer camps. For example, Tommy shared, "after the trainings they all want photos they all want your signatures and they all add you on Facebook." This recognition lends itself to a type of "celebrity" treatment reported by the international volunteers as Stewart confirmed,

> People are going to crowd around you and you're going to feel like a rock star. You end up signing boots and t-shirts, whereas you are kind of a nobody in England but to them you're an incredible person and they want your signature, they want your time and they want your hug.

This type of reception was evident from the very first year of the program as Stewart further recalled,

> At the end of each day everybody wanted things signed and everybody would invite us to dinner at night. They were genuinely upset if we couldn't go. Obviously we could only go to one house for dinner at a time. It was like being treated as a *king*.

This treatment led some of the international volunteers to feel completely accepted by the communities and is even described by Ralph as being a "second home." Similar sentiments were echoed by Stewart who added, "they've treated us like their own."

This idea was best captured at the conclusion of the Holy Week program with a presentation ceremony led by the local Salvadorian volunteers and other community members. They had asked the international volunteers to gather in the center of the small caged soccer field and several of the community leaders then took it in turns to thank the international volunteers for their efforts throughout the week. Each international volunteer was then presented with a personalized artisan gift locally made in El Salvador. This was followed by the international volunteers posing in photographs with some of the community members and signing the t-shirts of the youth participants.

The combination of being welcomed from the beginning of the trip, the happiness and warmth that exuded from the local community members and the special celebrity treatment resulted in the international volunteers feeling accepted by the communities.

Challenges to involvement. All volunteers reported facing some type of challenge or difficulty in being committed to their participation in the AVOCA project. For the international volunteers, any challenges to their participation were only relative to the Holy Week program. Whereas for the local Salvadorian volunteers, challenges to their involvement extended beyond the Holy Week and throughout the entire year. The challenges therefore vary slightly between both groups with some similarities between the notion of sacrifice that is typically related to working commitments.

Work commitments. For the local volunteers, their ability to volunteer for AVOCA was contingent on their year-round work responsibilities, especially during the time of the Holy Week program. This was particularly felt when volunteers were completely reliant on their job for their main source of income to support their families. This ultimately limited the amount of time some volunteers could give. Sebastian offered the example of his own schedule during the Holy Week program,

> Right now I would have to be at work but I asked for time off at least until I finish for the morning, then I'll get back to work. Thankfully it is my own job, so, I take my son there so he can work. I give time that I have here in the mornings, mostly in the mornings because in the afternoons I can't come because I have to be there at work.

Sebastian's example spoke to the commitment given by some of the local volunteers who typically have work commitments and need to plan cover for the times they are volunteering with the program.

Similar examples were shared by other local volunteers. In some cases, other volunteers could only partially participate in the activities. Mateo described his scenario for this year's program,

> From the start on Saturday and Sunday we are involved in the coach trainings and due to work I wasn't able to do the three days. But even being far away, I've been staying in touch with the guys in case there was any problems.

In Mateo's case, he worked a long distance away from the stadium where the program was held. Therefore, he missed three days of the program but still demonstrated his commitment by remaining in touch with the volunteer committee members to check in on the progress.

Working commitments did not present the same challenge to some of the international volunteers' participation. For Stewart however, as a school teacher, his participation was always typically reliant on whether or not the school holidays in the UK align with the Holy Week holiday in El Salvador,

> I think the other two years [missing the program] were literally just because of the school holidays and I wasn't allowed the time off because of the school holiday didn't fall right. The school I was at wouldn't give me the time off it was just down to that.

Otherwise for many international volunteers they made a conscious decision to take time off from their work or school commitments. This presented a slight contrast between both sets of volunteers. The local volunteers had less of a choice to navigate their working commitments for the full duration of the Holy Week program. This often resulted in the local volunteers working through the night in order to manage both their volunteer responsibilities with their work commitments. However, for the international volunteers, they were able to remove themselves from their regular working environments and dedicate most of their time to the program during the Holy Week.

Family tensions. Volunteering for the AVOCA project presented some additional challenges for the participants. For the international volunteers, their participation caused some unrest for their family members back home. This is typically felt before heading out for the Holy Week program and is finished by time they return home. However, for some of the local Salvadorian volunteers, their ongoing commitment to the program presented a strain on their own family relationships. For example, Mateo shares,

> Well in my family it [volunteering for AVOCA] has even caused me problems. Although I haven't quit because sometimes if I have the time, instead of using it for family time I'm on the field during the week and on weekends if there's a tournament I go to that as well.

While this example speaks to Mateo's year-round commitment to volunteering in his community, other volunteers feel this strain during the Holy Week. Since this is one of few occasions throughout the year recognized as a national holiday, families often take this time to spend together. However, these participants are choosing to volunteer their

time for the program instead. Diego explained this difficulty for him, “Normally Holy Week is a week for vacation but I kind of neglect the family, since I’m practically working full time for AVOCA.”

Cultural encounter. Overall the Holy Week program offered the international volunteers an opportunity to engage in a cultural experience. They became aware of some differences between their own cultures and the culture they observed in El Salvador. For some of the international volunteers their first visit to the country offered some surprises. Stewart summarized his feelings of this, “the first year with AVOCA was just a big culture shock and I went back home after absolutely buzzing for the next year.” Similar sentiments of shock were expressed by the other international volunteers. They also indicated a keen desire to return to El Salvador and continue their participation with the AVOCA project each year.

Part of the cultural experience reported by the international volunteers was their opportunity to participate in more traditional cultural events. For example, the final day of the program falls on the Easter Friday of the Holy Week. Around the country, this day is a national holiday and is celebrated by each community with their own processions. One of the main community activities involves painting the streets with religious murals. These images are initially mapped out using chalk spanning the entire width of the street. Multiple buckets of salt mixed with dye are prepared as paints and used to carefully fill in the chalk outlines of the murals by hand. This activity involves the whole community and the process begins on the Thursday morning through Friday night in time for the evening

procession. The procession then passes through the community walking over the top of the paintings symbolizing the beginning of the Easter holiday.

Each year, the international volunteers are invited to one of the participating communities and to watch the street paintings be crafted early on the Friday morning. Ralph recollected the first time he experienced this,

> One of the first really cool experiences was when visited one of the communities for a meal. We came to look at the carpets which are a salt carpet painting on display during Easter time. It is all religious based and beautiful so we got brought into kind of watch them make it. They had tables set out in the streets for us. One of the translator's grandmother made us sandwiches so we all got to sit down in the street and enjoy a meal with a local community. All the kids we had just trained all week were running around and to see them and also be a part of making the salt carpets was the first time we got to go into this community and experience that.

Tommy also remembers participating in this activity with the same community,

> I think that the biggest thing is going into the communities and seeing how people live. You talk to these coaches and kids for the whole week, you know you talk to them and you interact with them but you don't understand how somebody lives until you see where they live and their house and you compare it to your own personal life.

It is these interactions with the communities themselves that also present the international volunteers with an opportunity to witness some of the struggles faced by

many of the people they are spending this time with on a daily basis. The experience of visiting the communities illuminates a way of living that is often very different to their own. This experience ultimately has an impact on the international volunteers in ways that were not necessarily anticipated before making their commitment to volunteer with AVOCA which are presented further in the commitment phase of the volunteer journey.

Discrimination from afar. While the international volunteers reported strong feelings of warmth, being welcomed and being accepted in the communities, some observations from the field revealed instances of discriminatory behaviors during the Holy Week program. These behaviors were typically exhibited by some of the international volunteers. These cases were not reported by the international volunteers themselves but were observed from the perspective of the participant researcher. These behaviors represented acts of discrimination based on race, gender and sexuality.

On several occasions, some of the international volunteers were engaging in the act of mimicking the accents of local Salvadorian people. Specifically, this involved conversing in English to one another while impersonating some of the other local Salvadorian volunteers. One popular impersonation during the week was that of a local Salvadorian volunteer nick-named “Pablo the monkey.” These acts occurred frequently throughout the week and were observed on more than one occasion. These behaviors were often witnessed between the international volunteers themselves but were also expressed with some of the local Salvadorian volunteers who then joined in. This made some of the other international volunteers noticeably uncomfortable.

Additional examples of discriminatory behaviors were exhibited in the confines of the minivan that would transport the international volunteers and some of the local Salvadorian volunteers back and forth between their accommodation and the stadium. It was on this minivan that another example of questionable interaction occurred. Here I present some of my own field notes capturing the following incident,

> We [the volunteers] were sat in the minivan after dinner on our way home after a full day at the stadium. In the van Nicolas was looking at his cell phone and announced the discovery of a joke that he described as being racist. After sharing this aloud, Nicolas seemed unsure about whether or not to proceed in telling the joke to the rest of the group. His initial reaction appeared to be one of embarrassment at admitting to finding the joke in the first place. He even followed with the comment of "it was really bad." However, he was encouraged by two of the international volunteers – Ralph and Tommy – to share the joke. Somewhat sheepishly, Nicolas proceeded to read aloud "why was white chocolate invented?" After a short pause he continued with, "because it gives black children something to make their hands dirty with." The two international volunteers then reassured Nicolas this was "not a bad joke." Nicolas then proceeded to translate the joke into Spanish and share it again to Diego who was sat in the front seat of the van.

Some of the international volunteers also engaged in misogynistic behaviors. For example, there was occasions when some of the male volunteers would openly cat-call and commentate on the looks and appearances of female members of the public on the

street. Similar behaviors were also observed when dining in several restaurants with comments being made about female servers. While some effort was made to disclose these comments between the male volunteers, there were occasions when the comments were heard by the female volunteers once again causing discomfort.

Additional jokes were made throughout the week relative to male sexual orientation. Frequent lines between the international volunteers and the local volunteers were made regarding homosexuality and questioning the sexual preferences of one another. These were always referenced in a joking fashion and usually occurred when male participants were trying to bond with one another or make fun of a particular volunteer when in smaller groups. Once again, these interactions were often overheard by other volunteers who were not participating in these discussions adding to their increasing discomfort.

Upon hearing several instances of such behaviors in the opening days of the Holy Week program, I decided to speak privately with one of the senior international volunteer organizers for the project. I shared with him my concern at some of the behaviors exhibited by the international volunteers in particular. He listened carefully and despite not noticing this himself, was swift in discussing the issue with one of the main culprits involved in the behaviors that were questioned. This quickly materialized in an uneasy discussion between the three of us inside the stadium on the very first morning of the camp activities. I expressed my concerns at the behaviors I had witnessed and explained how these behaviors are discriminatory, hurtful and damaging. This comment was not well received and was even resisted as an accusation that was not true. After a short

discussion about the issue with no conclusion, we continued with our duties at the camp. Throughout the remainder of the week, the international volunteers who engaged in these behaviors were noticeably more cautious around me.

Phase Three - Commitment

This final section of this narrative presents the different elements involved in the third commitment phase of the volunteer journey. First the volunteers reflect on how their time with AVOCA has been a positive one resulting in feelings of happiness and satisfaction. Multiple testimonies then spoke to the impact of being a volunteer in the AVOCA project and how this has positively impacted upon the lives of the volunteers themselves. These reflections reveal varying degrees of impact between the international volunteers and the local Salvadorian volunteers. For both sets of volunteers however, their experiences with AVOCA have had a transformational influence on their lives ultimately resulting in their continued participation and commitment to the project.

Positive feelings. First, it was clear to recognize that both sets of volunteers feel good about volunteering with the AVOCA project. The volunteers spoke of feelings of satisfaction and pride with the work they were doing and the contributions they felt they were making. Alejandro echoes this sentiment, “I remember the first time I felt happy and up till now I still feel happy and content, not just for myself, but also for the kids.” Diego also referenced the same feelings and explained, “you get the satisfaction of helping all the kids that participate in the AVOCA project.” The satisfaction of these volunteers is intimately tied to the happiness and satisfaction of the children in their communities.

A similar account is shared by Mateo who speaks of his own satisfaction in the growth of his community's soccer school,

> Personally it has impacted me a lot because I started out with like fifteen kids and now I have almost sixty kids. That's very important to me. That means that I am doing something good. In my life that is a very big satisfaction, to have a lot of kids there.

Sebastian relates to this notion of feeling satisfied at the work and progress being made as he explained,

> Sometimes you get tired but with the desire to participate and then after it ends, you feel like you have been worked fully with what you have been able to give and God knows that you deserve to feel that satisfaction of a duty fulfilled.

The volunteers felt rewarded by their work and their commitment despite how challenging it was for them over their multiple years of involvement. This commitment was a key ingredient in their satisfaction.

The international volunteers mentioned feelings of loving what they do with the AVOCA project with Ralph claiming this was the "highlight of my year." For some of the international volunteers there is also a sense of pride in how the program has grown since its beginnings. Stewart remarked,

> This year being the tenth year of the project has been especially proud. You can really stand back and see how its evolved with all the different people there has been from around the world now. There is a lot of pride and I feel like a father

> figure watching the young children getting on and doing the same as I did all those years ago.

All of these emotions contribute to the positive feelings that the volunteers have experienced over multiple years participating in the program. This affirmative spirit served as a base for the volunteers to be able to reflect deeper in how their experiences have further impacted their lives.

Eye-opening experience. Many of the international volunteers mentioned how their participation in AVOCA's Holy Week program was an eye-opening experience for them. They expressed how being a volunteer awakened them to make certain realities visible that previously they had not been able to see. Tommy communicated this moment for himself, "It's eye-opening how it has fully changed my thought process like I said, politically, culturally, you see where people are coming from and you realize that when you go home." This realization strikes the international volunteers upon returning to their home countries after their time in El Salvador. The fresh memories of how they felt while in El Salvador offer a different lens to experience what has previously been normal to them in their homes.

One such example of this is the contrast in the sense of community between what was experienced in El Salvador and what is understood at home. Tommy reflected on this idea,

> People are too caught up in life at work and some people are just snobby, they don't want to share what they have, what's theirs is theirs and if they feel like they've earned it then you can kick rocks. There's no community as there is here

> [in El Salvador]. Here I feel everybody really looks out for each other and your neighbors are your neighbors and they really care. I feel like it's just a hard thing to find back in the States.

In a similar vein, Ralph expresses his perspective on some of the differences between the outlook of the American people back home to what he witnessed from the people in El Salvador,

> I think that we get caught up too much with our materialism in the US and I don't think we enjoy life for the moment. I feel like here the people make the best of what they have and enjoy it as much as they can.

Andrew also noticed this contrast between the community he is used to back home in the United Kingdom compared to communities in El Salvador,

> I suppose just materially here when you visit El Salvador and the communities that we are visiting, materially they probably have less than us but we have never met happier and generous people. So what little they have they are willing to share with you unconditionally.

Stuart also shared this position when contrasting his life back home compared to his time in El Salvador,

> You don't get people looking you in the eye and saying good morning or good afternoon, good evening, how are you? You just don't get that in England and I think that's a major part of it and a huge difference. Certainly here in Soyapango it's the warmth of those people, some of which haven't got a lot.

These were all noticeable differences the international volunteers were able to immediately identify when asked to consider how their own perspectives might have changed since becoming a volunteer with AVOCA. These initial observations serve as a platform in understanding how this may have changed or shaped their own behaviors.

Coupled with these initial observations of the differences felt back home, the international volunteers also consider the positive mentality of the El Salvadorian people given the adversity they face. Andrew reflected, "maybe it's something we have learned from visiting here through the hardship you see people just get on with it. Whatever their situation they're doing their best to survive." Ralph shared a similar view and commented that, "I feel like here the people make the best of what they have and enjoy it as much as they can." This is an attitude that was greatly admired by the international volunteers.

The international volunteers also go further slightly in suggesting that much of these hardships are not necessarily in the hands of the community members, and that the resilience of these people despite these circumstances should be commended. Ralph explains,

> No matter what it is, not everything in life is going to go exactly your way. Sometimes you're going to have your lows, sometimes you're going to have your highs and I think that El Salvador is a perfect example. You know you may be thrown into a bad situation but you still have to make the best out of it and be the best version of yourself.

Tommy shared a slightly different perspective,

> You can't control where you started. Some of these people were dealt a different hand and that's just how it is. You've just got to be lucky and thankful that you were dealt a significantly better hand. You need to realize that it is a human problem it's not a political problem.

These views suggest that the communities cannot control their own circumstances and they have to accept the reality of their struggle. However, their commitment to trying to overcome this reality is something that is praised by some of the international volunteers.

Life-changing lessons. On deeper reflection, the experiences as a volunteer for the AVOCA project have been described as creating some type of change in the participants. For the international volunteers, this change was even described as "life-changing." This notion was captured best by Stuart who confirmed,

> I think it's immeasurable to understand what the volunteers might get in return from this experience. Ultimately it's a life changing experience if you let it. It's hard to put into words what you get from coming out. I suppose you get a huge sense of belonging, a huge sense of self-worth, you meet new people you experience different cultures, it's a huge life-changing thing.

The experiences in El Salvador have had a particularly strong impact on Stuart's life. He summarized the overall impact for himself as, "Ultimately, AVOCA has given me a reason for existence. It's given me a reason to live it's been that positive."

While these sentiments have not been as strong for the other international volunteers, there have still been multiple examples of how volunteering with the AVOCA

project has significantly impacted their lives. Some of the volunteers spoke about how they have changed through these experiences. Sometimes this changed has actually been witnessed by the volunteers' own families as Ralph shares, "They [Ralph's family] have seen a change in myself which is why they continue to allow me to come here because they know how much I care about it and the effect it has had on me." Tommy communicated the same observation from his own family,

> My parents and my girlfriend get nervous when I come here [to El Salvador] but my parents also help me fund this trip, which means they do see a difference. For example at home I do get a little angry, not angry just cold sometimes and when I come back from El Salvador I am just very light and happy, just always in the mood to talk to people and everyone can talk to me.

Tommy concludes that this experience has turned him into a "better man."

While these sentiments were not reflected as much for the local Salvadorian volunteers, Sebastian believed, "AVOCA has helped us a lot and I feel that to me that makes me better as a human being." The following sub-categories will dig further into some examples of what exactly the volunteers felt has changed for them personally through their experiences.

New Perspectives. One of the first ways in which the volunteer experience impacted the participants is through initiating a changed perspective. The volunteers referenced this changed perspective relative to a general outlook on their lives. For example, Stuart explained,

> My experiences here have made me massively more relaxed and kind of 'whatever will be will be'. Whether that's a good thing or not I'm not sure. Going by the earthquake the other day and how relaxed I was I don't know! But it has helped me put things into perspective in terms of if there are rubbish things going on at work, it really doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things.

For Stuart, his perspective has changed to allow him to not get so caught up in the everyday toils and emotions in his life back home in England. Instead, he has a more relaxed outlook on his life and is more accepting of things that he believes are out of his control.

Diego also recognized how his perspective on the world around him has changed as a result of his volunteering experiences with AVOCA. He commented,

> With AVOCA you start to see everything differently. So personally you can see a lot further from that point of view and you don't have such a small mentality but instead you have a larger mentality. To be able to see everything that is happening, not just in this country, but in the whole world.

Here Diego is speaking to an increased awareness of his own circumstances and how they are related to the challenges faced in his community. He also started to connect his observations of his own country with similarities that may also be occurring in other countries around the world.

Tommy provided another example of how his world views have changed since volunteering with the AVOCA project. He discussed how his first-hand experiences in El

Salvador have shaped his opinions on certain political matters in the United States including immigration. Tommy shared,

> The biggest thing I guess was the first year when Donald Trump was running for office and 'The Wall' was the biggest topic. Before I came to El Salvador I was indifferent and had no real prior knowledge of how people lived or what it was like in other places. Then coming here and seeing how people actually live or seeing how things are and what people have to deal with on a day to day basis, especially with the gang members controlling certain areas. Going back home to the US I was like, 'Why is this even a topic?' Of course people would want to leave. I mean they were scared and why would you not be able to come here? It is a human right to be able to try and find something better. That was the thing that really opened my eyes how immigration is more of a human right. Why can't you find a better place to live or try to build a better life for your family?

From a slightly different perspective, Andrew also reflected on how his time in El Salvador has impacted his own world view,

> It has definitely shaped my values. You know understanding things that were taught to you when you were younger that were maybe more abstract. Maybe also some unlearning experiences or rediscovering or learning new truths and things not necessarily that you were told when you were younger.

This type of lens shifting is what Andrew believed helped shape his mindset and what he felt encouraged him to break free from what he described as a limiting mentality,

> My experiences here have taught me a lot of things about how to be accepting. Not just related to the project, but my own life. Perhaps it took my thinking processes outside of kind of a box or linear fashion and just think about not being too worried about the route of my own life, but just the destination. You know we get to where we get to and it doesn't matter so much about how we get there.

It is this mindset that Andrew claimed help guide him in a time when he made an important decision for himself and his family in leaving his home country and moving to another country. Andrew described,

> The most significant way it [volunteering for AVOCA] has affected me was in my decision to move to another country. It came about that we found a house and we had a short time to decide whether or not to buy it having quite spontaneously discussed it in a very general way that one day we would move to this place. So I had maybe two weeks to make a decision about whether I was going to leave a life that I had led for maybe 45 years behind and then go to a place where I wasn't going to have a job, I wasn't sure about how I was going to support my family and I would have no friends as such. I was going to start over again you know like a clean slate. Then for a couple of weeks I really struggled with it because in my mind I was thinking that I had to have all these things mapped out in my head like how am I going to get to that place where I'm going to have a job, where I'm going to bring some income in? Then there was just a turning point perhaps but I'm sure my experiences of El Salvador played a big part in eventually saying

> ‘OK, well let’s do it and see what happens. We can always come back!’ So far everything has worked out really well you and I’m still on that journey.

In this example, Andrew has clearly demonstrated how he believes his experiences of volunteering in El Salvador has not only helped to shape his own views, but also influenced some key decisions in his own life.

Character building. On a less dramatic scale, both sets of volunteers also referenced the ways in which their experiences have had a positive impact on their own personal character. The two most distinctive ways in which this was evidenced was by volunteers becoming both more appreciative and humble. The notion of appreciation can be applied to different areas of the volunteers’ lives. For Ralph, when thinking about some of the environments that the youth are raised in the communities he visited, he commented,

> It’s hard, you just see stuff here that makes you appreciate things back home. For example, some of the poverty and what the kids don’t have when they’re just, they’re normal and happy people who deserve the world. So it just makes you appreciate that maybe I was brought up a little bit easier and I don’t have the struggle as much.

Ralph’s appreciation also extends towards his family which again is something he has learned is often a problem in many of the El Salvadorian communities that AVOCA works with. He suggested,

> I think family is the most important part because you do see some families that have fallen apart here and in the States too. It helps you realize that that's what you have and you have to cherish every minute.

Andrew also shares an appreciation for his own life that his experiences as a volunteer have helped to illuminate,

> I suppose that's probably the one of the greatest benefits of the project as a volunteer, is it always kind of grounding you and reminding you. If I was to sum it up in one word I was just thinking it is 'gratefulness'. It's just what you've got be grateful for. Don't always be looking for the next big best thing. Instead try and nurture a sense of contentment in your life for what you've already got.

Andrew championed a notion of gratitude as one of the biggest ways in which being a volunteer has impacted his own life.

In addition to this increased level of appreciation, the volunteers also spoke of developing a level of humility through their participation in the program. This was a characteristic shared by both sets of volunteers. For Ralph, it was the interactions with the families and the children that had the most significant impact,

> To me these ten days are the highlight of my year. It's something I look forward to all the time. I became hooked. The emotions are just one of the most humbling things in the world. Especially seeing the parents care about what you are trying to do, providing a positive influence on their child's life when they might not have the best situations. It's very emotional. It's kind of hard to explain. It's also

> the most beautiful and humbling feeling you can have being involved in a child's life in a positive way.

Similar remarks about humility and feeling humbled were also shared by Santiago. However, he described how his humility was centered upon the behaviors of the international volunteers,

> Volunteering has helped me to be humble. I see the international volunteers as being people from a first world country. Whereas we might be considered an underdeveloped country and the humility the international volunteers have in coming and playing with the kids, sharing with the kids, getting dirty with the kids, sharing with you and to not have any disgust or look down on them. That has helped me in my daily life to also not look up or down on anyone. Instead to see us all as equals like God created us and it doesn't matter if we are from the same country, the same race, the same color.

Here Santiago clearly values the support of the international volunteers and their choice to leave their homes and volunteer in his country.

All of the international volunteers referenced different ways in which being a volunteer has had an impact on their own lives. It was noticeable in this part of the volunteer journey that considerably more impacts were shared by the internationals volunteers than the local Salvadorian volunteers.

Reformed motivations. Having reflected on the ways in which being a volunteer had an impact on their own lives, the volunteers revealed some different ways in which their motivation to participate in the AVOCA project has evolved throughout their

journey. For Ralph, his continued desire to participate was intimately connection to his overall enjoyment. He explained,

> The first experience was just about getting used to it and once I felt comfortable I really enjoyed it. Once I got home from that first experience it just clicked that I wanted to keep doing this, I really enjoyed it and I couldn't wait to go back.

All of the participants interviewed embodied similar desires to continue volunteering for the program. This was proven by their continued participation each year. Stuart summarized this feeling as a "love for the people and a dedication to the country" that keeps them coming back and continuing to volunteer. It is this love for the country and the communities that was initially at the core of the AVOCA project as Andrew explained, "the affection for the country and the people really was the catalyst for the project." This emotional connection was also well understood by some of the local volunteers. Santiago commented,

> I can imagine that for the international volunteers that come here, they like the country, the climate and the people. Here in El Salvador there is a strong caring for them perhaps because of the humility we have in this country. The volunteers feel a love and protection from the people.

The admiration being displayed is what formed the basis for friendships to occur through the program. Multiple participants from both sets of volunteers referenced how they have made new friends among some of the other volunteers in the program. Andrew suggested this was a natural outcome from the work the program has done over the past ten years. He explained,

> We've seen some really young people through the project just bordering on being an adult into becoming quite rounded and generous people that you would like to call your friends, just people that you'd like to hang out with.

The feelings of these friendships were reciprocated by some of the local volunteers who described the international volunteers as people they can "count on." Part of this dynamic extends from an admiration the local Salvadorian volunteers felt towards the international volunteers. Santiago explained,

> They [the international volunteers] are an example for me because they have to travel from their country and leave their families, their kids, all their loved ones. They don't know what awaits them here or what could happen to them. A lot of times they suffer by sleeping badly in the heat and even get sick here in this country because maybe they aren't used to Salvadoran things. They are examples for us to follow by motivating us. If they can do it from so far, how can we not do it being so close? I would like it to continue for many years, even when I'm not here anymore.

Santiago's strong sense of admiration was also echoed by Mateo, "because these people have come from so far away and care about us. Right here they don't do that." For both Santiago and Mateo, their admiration for the international volunteers also highlighted their disappointment at why other people from their own communities do not volunteer themselves.

These emotional instances of friendship and admiration transpired through the volunteer's multiple experiences volunteering in the program. These have served as a

cornerstone of their continued motivation to participate. With these emotional connections at the core, additional factors surfaced that tied the volunteers reformed motivations to their continued participation.

Being part of something. For some of the volunteers, their motivations for participating have shifted because they now feel as though they are a part of something special and are committed to the organization. For example, Ralph explained his views on what it means for him to be a volunteer based on his experiences, "volunteering is being a part of something that is bigger than yourself and trying to contribute to it in any way you can."

Alejandro had a similar perception when reflecting on why he feels so strongly about his role as a volunteer with AVOCA,

> Firstly because I am just one more person, among those that are collaborating here together, being a part of it. Since this started and until it ends, I am here. From the start to finish we are part of it.

This notion of being part of the program is something the volunteers have developed through their experiences over time.

Program growth and evolution. The motivations of the volunteers also are connected to the perceived growth and evolution of the program. Santiago reported,

> It has been a big evolution because when it started I remember there were very few of us. I remember meeting Stuart, Andrew and other coaches that came at that time but it was very small. Now we can see year to year each Holy Week there are ten to twelve international volunteers. Also the amount of kids has grown.

Mateo also confirmed that "each year has been better" and the "project is growing." The acknowledgement of the program's growth generated a sense of excitement and pride among the volunteers that they have been a key part of this evolution. This seemed to be a prime reason for the volunteers' continued motivation to participate in the program.

Improving community and impacting kids. As a result of AVOCA's growth and expansion each year, the local volunteers feel as though the program is instrumental in the development of their communities. Mateo stated that in his community, "I think if it wasn't for this project the community would be more dangerous." Improving the safety of the communities is a particularly crucial aspect that motivates the local volunteers.

One way in which the local volunteers felt that increased safety has been achieved is how the AVOCA project helped to bring different communities together. Diego acknowledged the success of bringing together people in his own community, "that was an achievement, the bringing together of everyone in the community." Not only do the volunteers feel this within their own communities but also with some of their neighboring communities. Perhaps Alejandro best captured these feelings,

> The AVOCA group is like a family because there are different communities, trying to have them all see themselves as equal. They get together and they can be from different communities but in that moment they aren't because there is only one flag, and the only flag is AVOCA in all the communities.

This collaboration of the multiple communities was noticed by both sets of volunteers however it was recognized more so by the local volunteers. The unique nature

of the Holy Week gatherings serves as a motivation for the local community members to maintain their participation in the program. This is particular symbolic when the local volunteers are used to living their lives in isolation from other communities due to the gang activities that keep certain areas divided.

Coupled with the motivation to continue improving their own communities was the belief that AVOCA also has a positive impact on the kids. There is clear recognition of how the program brings happiness to the kids and how the program also helps to develop the kids' values, bring them hope, offer opportunities for friendships and motivate them to continue their participation in sports. Most importantly the volunteers felt as though the program helps to bridge any differences between kids from different communities as Diego explained,

> One thing is the togetherness of the different communities. If you are from Pepeto you can't go to Bosque del Rio. So AVOCA is working on that part of the relationship. In this case for society so they start to get together more and they can see that there isn't any difference between them.

Together the belief that the AVOCA project has served to improve both the volunteer's local communities and positively impacted the kids, appeared as a key motivation for the participants continued involvement in the program.

Additional Findings

While the majority of the results reported above speak to the overall volunteer journey, there were some other interesting findings that emerged from the data collection and analysis. These finding were not necessarily planned for presentation in this study,

but they naturally emerged as consistent patterns when coding and analyzing the data from the interview transcripts and observations. These findings speak to the reach of SDP programming and how sport is actually being adopted as a vehicle for change in the communities. These findings will also feature in the overall discussion presented in the final chapter of this research.

Can't save everyone. Within the interview conversations the participants were asked to reflect on specific examples of how the AVOCA project has played a role in the development of their communities and change for the kids. The international volunteers referred to single-case success stories to demonstrate the overall performance of the program. Overall the international volunteers understood the success of the program in relation to impacting individual lives. This notion was captured by Tommy who stated,

> If it's not going to make a difference on a hundred people's lives at least just change one if you can, even if you don't change somebody's life but you put a smile on their face just for a day, an hour, it means the world.

Similar testaments were also expressed by Ralph who shared, "you just try to provide just a little bit to change if not for many people, at least if you can just change one person's life you're doing a good job."

This perspective was also evident in the thoughts of some of the local volunteers in the program. For example, when asked to reflect on the impact of volunteering for the youth participants in the program, Santiago shared, "Maybe we can't change the world, but yes, we can change the world for that child, for that person." While this belief of being able to change the lives of individuals was strong among the volunteers, there was

some acknowledgement of how the program may not be providing the same impact for all the youth participants. After discussing the positive impact he felt the program had on his own community, I asked Diego if he felt this was the same for all the kids. In his response, Diego admitted, "No, not all… But yes, some were saved and also, for example, we sadly had a boy that died, was killed, who had started to get away from all of that [the gangs]."

Sport as a distraction. While all volunteers acknowledged the positive impacts of sport on the lives of the youth participants, there was a range in ways upon which the volunteers actually felt sport was helping the situation. Rather than describing the ways in which participation in sport directly challenged the issues faced in the communities, the volunteers described this sporting exposure as a means of escaping the dangers and troubles that plague their communities. This was explicitly referenced by Mateo who spoke about the impact he felt the newly refurbished soccer field had in his community,

> Since they [AVOCA] built us the soccer field, which was long ago, the field really changed things for us. So that's when I realized that through soccer we could keep the kids a little bit further away from the bad things.

Diego also acknowledged how the opportunity to participate in sport offered a way of distancing youth from the violence in their communities, "It's really great, I mean working, knowing that you contribute to a lot of kids being able to stay away from so many things that happen in our country."

The idea of helping youth stay away from these social problems was also observed in different forms. Other volunteers noted on multiple occasions how sport

served as an opportunity to "entertain" the youth. In addition, the volunteers believed this entertainment also provided the means to both "occupy" and "distract" the young people. During the interview, I picked up on the use of the word *distraction* and asked if this was enough to serve the needs of the youth? Diego offered this response,

> Basically no… because… um… with the distraction, well, the only thing they do is maybe there are a lot right now, like, I am bringing three kids that didn't eat breakfast, maybe they didn't eat because their mom didn't have food, or because they were more interested in coming to practice, the sports, um, so what it does is distracts, but it isn't enough because remember that distraction doesn't get them food, distraction doesn't get them shoes.

In summary this chapter has presented a narrative that captures the essence of the volunteer journey. That is, a transformational journey that occurs through three distinct phases. These volunteer phases have been labelled as the investment, connection and commitment phases. Within each phase are a series of sub-categories that explicate the types of roles, emotions, motivations and impacts that occurred within each phase. Multiple perspectives were shared using the words of the volunteers themselves as well as some observations from the field as a participant researcher. This presentation of data has generated several key discussion points and possible contradictions in the volunteer journey that will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This final chapter will first deliver a summary of the study and overview of the conclusions drawn from the data results in the previous chapter. This chapter will then present a detailed interpretation of the research findings relative to the existing literature base as well as new discoveries that emerged. Most importantly this chapter will offer a discussion of the implications for action in the field of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP). Finally, this chapter will acknowledge the limitations of this study and present ideas for future recommendations of further research for the SDP movement.

Research Summary

SDP is delivered around the world as a vehicle for peace and conflict resolutions in conflict-damaged societies suffering from various societal issues of injustice and inequality (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014). Despite the popular adoption of sport as a developmental tool, little evidence exists that demonstrates the effectiveness of sport's application in the field of developmental work (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). Not only is there a lack of sufficient evidence to justify its use, further studies suggest that SDP can be detrimental and enhance the societal issues they purport to serve (Coalter, 2013; Rossi & Jeanes, 2016). As a result, there have been increased calls for more rigorous sociological studies to help understand these critiques and offer solutions for SDP programming (Burnett, 2015).

So far, the majority of research conducted in SDP has focused on the targeted recipients of these developmental initiatives (Peachey et al., 2015). Yet far fewer studies have been conducted seeking to better understand the roles and experiences of the

volunteers for these types of programs (Peachey et al., 2011). As a result, volunteer participants have often been overlooked in the research despite being crucial stakeholders in SDP organizations (Smith, Cohen, & Pickett, 2014). The purpose of this study was to address this lacuna in the research base and offer an extensive understanding of the volunteer experience in a specific SDP program. This study offers an alternative perspective to investigating the SDP movement and serve as a direct response to calls for greater research in this area of study.

This study examined the experiences of volunteers in the A Voice of Central American's (AVOCA) SDP project based in El Salvador, Central America, and adopted an interpretive, phenomenological research design that explored how volunteers experienced and understood their role in the AVOCA project. This exploration involved three key components, focused on exploring what the volunteers' actual experiences have been, what were the participants' motivations to volunteer and what has been the impact that volunteering has had on their own lives. Through a hermeneutical phenomenological research design, this study adopted a critical theoretical bricolage to understand the volunteer experience for this particular SDP program.

A total of ten volunteers were purposefully selected to participate in this study. These participants all had a minimum three years of experience volunteering for the AVOCA project. Six of the participants were local Salvadorian volunteers and four of the participants were international volunteers from the United Kingdom and the United States. All participants were interviewed during AVOCA's Holy Week program during the Easter holidays in El Salvador. Five of the interviews were conducted in both English

and Spanish with the assistance of a qualified translator. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for coding purposes. Observations as a participant-researcher also resulted in field notes that contributed to the data set for this study.

A hermeneutical phenomenological method of data analysis was employed to make sense of the data collected in an attempt to determine the essence of the volunteer phenomenon. The hermeneutical circle served as a useful means of analyzing and interpreting the data collected from this study because it allowed each of the participants to reflect on their own volunteer journey. This process involved a constant backwards and forwards cycle between the data and the meaning-making process that resulted in the discovery of the volunteer journey. A transformational journey emerged as the core essence of the volunteer experience with three distinct phases that all volunteers lived through. These three phases were subsequently labelled the *investment, connection* and *commitment* components, forming the multiple parts to the volunteer journey.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into three key sections. The first section will offer a critical commentary on the three phases of the volunteer journey presented in the previous chapter. This initial discussion will link findings back to the research base detailed in Chapter 2 seeking out a series of contradictions between the data presented in Chapter 4. Both consistencies and inconsistencies with the literature will be referenced as well as any unique findings that were found. The following section will build upon this commentary and make recommendations in three major areas for SDP organizations. These include the recognition of an opportunity for transformation in SDP, the need for volunteer vetting and training processes and a proposal for SDP to adopt

fresh curricula rooted in the theory of critical pedagogy. This chapter will conclude with the overall limitations of this research along with ideas for future scholarship.

The Volunteer Journey

The major findings of this study unraveled the essence of the volunteer experience to be a transformational journey. This journey materialized over time across three distinct phases. Before discussing these three phases in detail, it is important to acknowledge that the discovery of the volunteer journey was not an anticipated outcome at the beginning of this research endeavor. This core essence of the volunteer phenomenon emerged as a result of the hermeneutical cycle employed throughout the research methods and data analysis components of this study.

A similar approach was utilized by Gellweiler, Wise and Fletcher in 2018, examining the experiences of sporting event volunteers that concluded in the discovery of a volunteer journey. The authors also embraced hermeneutical phenomenological research methods in exploring participants' experiences when volunteering for major sporting events. The results of this particular study posited that participants engaged in three separate phases of the volunteer journey labelled: role entry, role enactment and role exit. This recent literature discovery adds validity to the data analysis and findings of my own research, as it revealed similar outcomes in the phenomenon of volunteering.

However, the three phases of the volunteer journey for this study have been labelled as the *investment, connection and commitment* phases. These phases describe the overall process of the volunteer journey, starting with an initial *investment* upon first joining the AVOCA project in the buildup to the Holy Week program. Next the

volunteers developed a *connection* to the project when actively on the ground in El Salvador. Participation in these first two phases resulted in a *commitment* to the AVOCA project. This commitment resulted in the continued participation of volunteers in the project.

It is important to add that this volunteer journey is not a one-time linear process. Since all volunteers interviewed in this study have participated as volunteers on multiple occasions, their journey is more accurately represented as a cycle. Each volunteer passes through the three phases each year they have volunteered for the AVOCA project and participate in the Holy Week program. If after their first year volunteering they choose to commit to the second year, the participants are then re-investing their time, continuing to build their connection to the project and then further increasing their commitment each time they pass through the three phases.

While these three phases were consistent for all volunteers interviewed in this study, there was evidence of nuance between the international volunteers' and local volunteers' experiences throughout. The previous chapter presented some of these differences in experience for the volunteers. It is the goal of the following sections to ground these differences in relation to the existing literature base and previous studies in this discipline. It is worth mentioning here that the following discussion is guided by the theoretical frameworks employed by this study.

The critical theoretical bricolage of critical theory, cultural studies theory and critical pedagogy all serve as a lens to examine the results of this research. In a broad sense, critical theory has guided the analysis that unravels issues of power and hegemony

from the data collected for this study. The added perspective of cultural studies theory has highlighted alternative perspectives outside of the dominant hegemonic discourse to frame SDP. Critical pedagogy then serves as a guide in which these critical understandings can be transformed and applied in the field for future research.

Volunteer investment. The first phase in the volunteer journey was the process of an initial *investment* to the AVOCA project. Within this phase were a series of sub-themes that detailed the volunteers' invitation to join the program as well as the primary tasks and responsibilities associated with their role. This phase highlighted the volunteers' initial feelings at the prospect of participating in the Holy Week program that were mixed between fear and anxiety as well as anticipation and excitement. Finally, the investment phase demonstrated the volunteers' initial motivations in wanting to participate in the project.

Volunteer beginnings. One of the most significant observations from this first phase was the importance placed on the volunteers' initial connection to the AVOCA project. All of the participants told of an initial invitation to volunteer through a personal connection to the project. This is unlike many developmental programs whose recruitment of volunteers often depends upon more structured means. Personal connections between the volunteer and developmental programming of this nature is not an area that has been discussed thus far in the research. Therefore, greater examination could be given to understanding how such a relationship could influence a volunteer's decision to continue their participation with a developmental project.

Most of the roles and responsibilities identified by the volunteers were typical of many types of SDP programming. For example, the role of fundraising and donation collections are common in programs seeking to gather items from social minority countries for reuse and distribution in social majority communities (Schulenkorf & Adair, 2014). These were some of the more common roles and responsibilities associated with the international volunteers. While this aspect of SDP programing has been criticized by some authors (Cameron & Haanstra, 2008), the gift-giving during the Holy Week program was seldom referenced throughout the participant interviews.

Other such roles and responsibilities were more heavily focused on the organizational components of the Holy Week program. This included facility rental, uniform orders, transportation for some of the youth participants to and from the stadium and general coordination of the activities for the week. This part to the program was more controlled by the local Salvadorian volunteers themselves. This level of involvement offers an opportunity for volunteers to build increased autonomy and ownership in programming (Wallis & Lambert, 2014). These authors add that greater autonomy for volunteers is linked to increased motivation to participate. While this is a positive finding, the lack of these types of opportunities for local stakeholders in SDP is an element that is often critiqued (Darnell, 2013).

Emotional curiosity. The initial investment phase of being a volunteer evoked a range in emotions for the participants. The anticipation of the Holy Week program summoned feelings of both excitement and fear between both sets of volunteers. While the excitement felt by the volunteers fueled the positive experience overall, the first-time

feelings of fear and anxiety for the international volunteers should be more extensively examined. The source of these emotions stemmed from knowing little about the destination and from observations of various media outlets that contributed to their understandings of El Salvador. This is a key finding that will be further discussed in the implications section of this chapter.

It is likely for these types of pre-trip emotions to have an impact on the overall volunteer experience. No such examples in the SDP literature reference the connection between a volunteer's pre-trip feelings and how these anticipatory emotions can be either enhanced or transformed upon actually engaging in the program. For example, the international volunteers in this study all referenced emotions of fear and uncertainty at the dangers they might face when volunteering in El Salvador. However, their actual experience was opposite to these fears. Therefore, it could be suggested that having one's initial suspicions overturned is a key factor in the volunteers' overall enjoyment. This could ultimately impact their decision to continue their participation in the project.

Altruistic and egoistic motivations. Another of the key findings in this initial phase were the motivations to volunteer reported by the participants. These were predominantly represented through examples of wanting to serve and help others with some volunteers wanting to further one's knowledge in soccer and coaching. Using Clary and Snyder's (1999) functionalist model of volunteer motivations, the volunteer participants in this study reported motivations that were aligned with a combination of their values and desires for self-enhancement. The initial motivations for wanting to participate were therefore more altruistic in nature, which is consistent with previous

findings in volunteer motivation research (Wang, 2004). These initial motivations were also consistent with other studies that examined volunteer motivations in SDP programs (Peachey et al., 2013). These identified participant's values and love of sport as primary factors in choosing to volunteer.

While the motivations reported above were all broadly categorized as being altruistic, there were some differences between the international and local volunteers in the source of their motivation. For example, the international volunteers spoke more generally about the desire to help and give to others, that many of the international volunteers described as "less fortunate than themselves." However, for the local Salvadorian volunteers, their motivations were similarly altruistic yet focused on giving to their own communities. This was because the local volunteers could relate to the struggles facing their people because they lived in the same communities. Some of the local volunteers could also identify with the youth participants because they reported having the same challenges when growing up in these areas. This was a unique finding that requires greater consideration between different levels of altruistic motivations. Since these might differ between international participants and those locally based volunteers who reside in the communities they serve.

In addition to the altruistic motivations reported, some other initial motivations shared by the volunteers were more egoistic in nature. These included the desire to enhance their own personal coaching and teaching skills as well as knowledge of the sport. The local volunteers in particular also reported being motivated to participate as a volunteer as this provided an opportunity to serve a project that boosted their credibility

within their community. Similar egoistic motivations of self-enhancement were also reported in other studies conducted in SDP (Peachey et al., 2014).

Volunteer connection. The second phase of the volunteer experience is where participants developed a *connection* to the AVOCA project. This connection evolved when the volunteers actively engaged in the Holy Week program in El Salvador. Throughout the course of this particular week, a range of responsibilities were reported for both sets of volunteers, although the focus for their roles was predominantly coaching related. While much of the international volunteers' time was spent participating in the program, it was observed that they also enjoyed multiple opportunities to relax and engage intourist activities. However, for the local volunteers they experienced more challenges to their full participation. Throughout the Holy Week program, the international volunteers especially developed strong emotional ties to the communities based on the warm welcome they received and friendliness they experienced. Overall the Holy Week program provided a space for a positive cultural encounter although this was marred by acts of discriminatory behaviors in the field.

Self-determination, dependency and deficit dualism. The data from this study shared details on the roles and responsibilities of the volunteers throughout the week. Specifically, it was evident how the roles of the local Salvadorian volunteers have evolved over time, resulting in an increased involvement in the organizational components of the program. As mentioned, increased responsibility of this nature can lead to enhanced feelings of self-determination resulting from increased perceived competence and relatedness to the environment (Wallis & Lambert, 2014).

While these increased opportunities for the local Salvadorian volunteers create opportunities for increased self-determination, there was evidence of the local volunteers still being dependent on the international volunteer base, especially when making more important decisions in the coordination of events. With some of the international volunteers taking on more faciliatory roles, they were instrumental in the higher-level decision-making of the program. These interactions between the international volunteers and local volunteers reflected hierarchical relations that have been witnessed in other examples of SDP programming (Mwaanga & Prince, 2016). This represents more centralized leadership structures that offer minimal autonomy to local governance groups (Mwaanga & Prince, 2016).

Further examples of hierarchy were noticed among international volunteers who were not as helpful in the day-to-day tasks related to the program and carried an heir of entitlement with their duties. Unlike the local Salvadorian volunteers who were early to set up the fields, preparing the equipment for the youth and generally serving all areas of organizing the day's events, the actions and attitudes of the international volunteers seemed to suggest they were beyond any of these industrious duties. This was evident even when it was seemingly obvious that help and assistance was needed, for example in moving goalposts or collecting equipment from the fields when the camps had finished.

In contrast, one of the international volunteers discussed their main role within the program as someone that is there to share coaching ideas with the local coaches. He perceived these ideas as benefitting the local coaches, as some of them will have no coaching qualifications or experience and in his words were "winging it." Interestingly,

this particular international volunteer had no formal coaching qualifications of his own and limited coaching experience. Whereas some of the local Salvadorian volunteers he was working with possessed some form of coaching or teaching qualifications and held professional coaching positions. This international volunteer's naïve assumption reflects Coalter's (2014) critique of SDP programming that engenders a deficit approach to developmental work (p. 69). This is where SDP programs can be guilty of a paternalistic doctrine that assumes "Others" as deficient beneficiaries of their efforts (Tiessen, 2011; Sanders, 2016).

Collectively, these findings reveal a trio of dualistic relationships from the data. First, there was evidence of opportunity for the local Salvadorian volunteers to increase their self-determination through increased autonomy during the Holy Week program. However, this autonomy was still concealed under a veil of volunteer hierarchy, creating an interlocked dependency relationship. This reported autonomy seemed limited to tasks and responsibilities that some of the international volunteers did not appreciate as worthy of their time and effort, further compounding the hierarchical relations. These observations were added to a deficit perspective from some of the international volunteers in the capabilities of the local volunteer group.

Hegemonic discourse. Guided by the critical lens of Gramsci, my observations as a participant-researcher throughout the Holy Week program presented a series of contradictions from the data. While the international volunteers spoke passionately about their love for the country and the friendships they developed with the community members, there was multiple examples of discriminatory behaviors that contradicted

these words. These behaviors reflected dominant hegemonic discourse that reinforced social hierarchy as well as stereotypical and prejudiced beliefs around race, gender and sexuality. While there are multiple examples in the SDP research base that critique similar issues of discrimination and hegemony (Darnell, 2013), this research offers its own examples.

In their interviews for this research, the international volunteers spoke boundlessly about the warm feelings and welcome they received from the communities in El Salvador. These types of positive emotions and interactions led to feelings of acceptance among the international volunteers and ultimately played a major role in creating an enjoyable experience for them. This relationship building is also recognized as a positive impact for international volunteers in contributing to their own feelings of worthiness and self-satisfaction within developmental programming. However, despite these positive reflections, my observations as a participant researcher recorded several instances of discriminatory behaviors from the international volunteers.

For example, this was emphasized when one of the international volunteers referenced being like a “celebrity” and feeling like a “king” when visiting El Salvador. The very narrative of being like royalty echoes a paternalistic and neo-colonial tone that has been heavily critiqued within international programming before (Devereux, 2008). Despite also claiming a deep-rooted respect and admiration for the Salvadorian people, this same international volunteer engaged in some of the aforementioned discriminatory acts throughout the Holy Week program. Yet when confronted on these behaviors, they denied the accusation and refused to acknowledge how these behaviors could inflict

harm. This example points to an element of discriminatory blindness in how volunteer behaviors can perpetuate negative stereotypes and understandings.

Another example of my observations from the field reported several instances of racial prejudice in the form of joke-telling between the international volunteers and the local Salvadorian volunteers. Instances of racism have also been found in other SDP programs (Tiessen, 2011). Darnell (2013) recognizes how racism in SDP has interlocked within broader social hierarchies' representative of modernity and international development. He further argues that SDP often provides a space to reify racial politics as a site for the construction and maintenance of whiteness as a social power (p. 58).

Similar types of interactions were reported that engender dominant hegemonic discourse surrounding both gender and sexuality norms. Interactions observed between male volunteers included teasing individuals through feminine and homophobic taunts. These interactions have been witnessed before in other SDP programs and create a hyper-masculine environment favoring male privilege and power (Hayhurst, 2011). Hayhurst (2011) continues with the explanation that these behaviors are typically tied to Eurocentric hegemonic masculinity that are sometimes inherent in sport participation programs (p. 533). Collectively examples of this discourse perpetuate patriarchy by enhancing gender inequality and heteronormative sexuality (Carney & Chawansky, 2016).

Volunteer privilege. In addition to dehumanizing hegemonic dynamics, some of the data findings reflected disparities in volunteer privilege. In the context of volunteer tourism or "voluntourism" that has been described as the "fast food version" of more

traditional volunteering (Ngo, 2013), my observations during the Holy Week program propose that the AVOCA project offered more of a voluntourism opportunity for the international volunteers than a developmental program. Feelings of fun and enjoyment were commonly expressed by the international volunteers stemming from beyond their interactions with the local community members and their participation in the Holy Week activities. The volunteers enjoyed multiple sightseeing opportunities and periods of relaxation throughout their stay. Some evenings multiple volunteers engaged in social drinking and on multiple occasions became intoxicated.

Here is where some SDP programs might straddle the borders between being a developmental project and program that facilitates volunteer tourism. Ngo's (2013) definition of voluntourism helps paint a picture that reflects some of the data presented in this study, "The rise of voluntourism aimed at young volunteers means organizations engage in selection process with lowered criteria as they try to reach higher number of volunteers; this can also imply the recruitment of more inexperienced and ignorant participants" (p. 54). The AVOCA project similarly had a limited criteria for volunteers other than a willingness to participate and the ability to purchase their own travel fare. It is possible this situation has contributed to the recruitment of inexperienced and ignorant participants whom are likely to engage in the aforementioned discriminatory behaviors witnessed throughout this study.

Additionally, it became more obvious throughout the Holy Week program that there was a significant difference between the commitment levels for the international volunteers and the local Salvadorian volunteers. The local Salvadorian volunteers are

dedicated to the AVOCA project throughout the entire calendar year, whereas for the international volunteers, the majority of their commitment is predominantly bound to the Holy Week program itself for some "fun in the sun" as one international volunteer described. With such contrasting commitments, it is inevitable that the level of sacrifice and determination needed to maintain the role of volunteer be significantly contrasted among both sets of participants.

For the international volunteers, their experience differed on the fact their commitment to the program was cemented while being temporally and spatially displaced from their own original environments. In other words, the international volunteers' experience was heavily influenced by the travel component of visiting El Salvador and participating in the program in a country different from their own. This was not the case for the local volunteers whose experience as a volunteer was spread throughout the entire year. While the Holy Week program served as a pivotal piece of the AVOCA project, this was the only time in which the international volunteers actively participated in the program on the ground, while for the local volunteers their participation remained throughout the year.

Therefore, the international volunteers have far greater freedom in their choice to participate for the AVOCA project during the Holy Week program. However, the local Salvadorian volunteers have a lesser degree of choice. This separation between volunteer commitment brings a level of privilege in volunteer accountability based on their level of participation. The notion of volunteer privilege was not something that emerged from initial explorations of the volunteerism research. However, it is an idea that was recently

studied by Gellweiler, Wise and Fletcher (2018) in their examination of volunteers in sporting mega events. It is recommended that future research on volunteer privilege and the impact of volunteer privilege should be conducted in the field of international development.

The dualism between volunteer self-determination and dependency, the discriminatory behaviors witnessed from the field and the differences in volunteer commitment speak to concerns of power, hegemony and privilege seemingly inherent within this example of an SDP and the wider context of international development (Ngo, 2013). These complex social power dynamics between volunteers and developmental program participants is under ongoing scrutiny (Ngo, 2013). These findings are discussed further in the implications section of this chapter with recommendations of how organizations could attempt to mitigate these risks and eradicate these issues in SDP.

Volunteer commitment. The experience of the initial investment and then connection phases resulted in a commitment to the AVOCA project. Upon completion of the Holy Week program, the volunteers reported positive emotions that affirmed their connection to the project and desire to continue their participation. Furthermore, on reflection of their respective experiences, being a volunteer in the AVOCA project resulted in a variety of impacts on their own lives. This included personal changes such as changes in their perspectives, moments they considered to be life-changing and other instances that resulted in personal change. Finally, the motivations of the volunteers also altered slightly in comparison to their original reasons for deciding to participate in the AVOCA project.

Satisfaction and retention. The first part to the volunteer commitment phase relates to the overall feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction referenced by the volunteers. It should not be surprising to learn that volunteers who report having an enjoyable experience are likely to return and continue their participation (Bang, Ross, & Reio, Jr, 2013). Additionally, these authors explain that organizational commitment is closely linked with enhanced social interactions between volunteers. This was a common feature from the participants, who all spoke highly of their positive experience and the friendships formed when participating in the Holy Week program.

Evolving motivations. This final phase of the volunteer journey also saw some changes in the motivations that volunteers referenced. For example, some volunteers initially reported their desires to join the AVOCA project to "help and serve others." However, these seem to have evolved after actually serving as a volunteer during the connection phase. In some cases, motivations changed with increased focus on wanting to serve the communities and impact the youth in these communities. The motivations essentially transformed from broad altruistic desires to a more narrowed focus on a specific population.

Another example of how participant motivations changed was through volunteers' recognition of how the AVOCA project itself has grown and evolved over time. The volunteers referred to this as feeling like they were "part of something" that was also "bigger than themselves." They have seemingly formed an intimate connection between the evolution of the program with their own feelings of satisfaction at playing a role in the project's growth.

Additionally, some of the volunteers referenced how their experience with the AVOCA project has encouraged them to engage more with other acts of service in their own communities. The finding aligns itself with studies conducted in the broader realms of developmental work and civic engagement in that these types of volunteering opportunities foster an increased commitment to civic participation (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). In other words, as a result of their participation in the AVOCA project, some of the volunteers have increased their acts of civic engagement in other areas of their lives outside of the project.

While there have been some efforts in SDP to understand volunteers' initial motivations to participation in SDP programs (Peachey et al., 2013), there is limited research that explores how volunteer motivations may have changed over time. There is scope here for further examination on volunteer motivations. Specifically, how motivations may have evolved as a result of their actual participation in a program. Understanding this relationship could be key in determining factors that help encourage volunteers to participate in the first place and then retain their services over prolonged periods.

An additional critical perspective of volunteer motivational change is also referenced given the contradictions between what volunteers said versus their actions in the field. Despite the international volunteers' strong voices of admiration and respect for the local community members, their acts of discrimination can be confusing to understand. One such idea may be that the actual motivations of the volunteers are rooted

in a “desire” for the development of “others” that reign from a construction of the volunteer’s self as savior (Darnell, 2013).

Understanding impact. Finally, understanding how the volunteer experience had an impact on the volunteers themselves was a crucial piece to this study. Multiple examples of volunteer impact were referenced throughout the interviews with participants. Using the results framework of the International Volunteer Impacts Survey (IVIS) by Lough, Sherraden and McBride (2012), the data evidenced impact across all components of the model including the development of international contacts, open-mindedness, perceived international understanding, intercultural relations, life plans, civic activism, and community engagement.

While multiple types of impact were referenced, some impacts were reported more frequently than others. For example, the international volunteers most heavily identified personal impacts such as increased open-mindedness. This was demonstrated by volunteer remarks about their perspectives being changed, such as being “less materialistic” and more “appreciative” of their own families and friends. This particular impact also sparked new levels of perceived humility as well as awareness and understanding among the international volunteers. Similar findings have also been reported among international volunteers in other types of sport and developmental programming (Peachey et al., 2013).

This change in perspective was seemingly fueled by the observation of poverty within the communities. Despite this struggle, the recognition of happiness among the community members had a significant influence on the international volunteers’

perspectives. This notion has been reported elsewhere in developmental studies that report how international volunteers remark on how happy the local community members are despite their lack of material wealth (Guttentag, 2009). Guttentag (2009) adds this is a perspective that should be cautioned as it can rationalize poverty struggles as something that local community members simply accept.

The biggest impacts for the local volunteers were aligned with the development of international contacts and community engagement. The local volunteers spoke fondly of the friendships they had developed with the international volunteers and how they value these interactions. This finding mirrors similar research that identified international social capital as a potential positive impact in developmental volunteering (McBridge, Lough, & Sherraden, 2012).

The local Salvadorian volunteers also appreciated the soccer coaching knowledge they felt they were benefitting from which fulfilled their desires to learn. Involvement in the program also offered a source of credibility to support the work they were trying to maintain throughout the year. Their overall participation in the AVOCA project increased their own social capital. While this notion of social capital building through SDP has been heavily scrutinized (Coalter, 2013), other studies have demonstrated increased social capital benefits for SDP volunteers (Peachey et al., 2015). This is typically manifest by an increased self-efficacy by local volunteer groups who have grown and benefitted from some of the education they have received.

What was most telling about the perceived impacts on the volunteers themselves, were the differences between impacts reported by the international volunteers versus the

local Salvadorian volunteers. The international volunteers reported far more examples of how being a volunteer had an impact on their own lives. Furthermore, these impacts were mostly connected to personal transformations. This finding matches more contemporary studies that highlight the imbalance between perceived benefits of developmental program participants and the actual volunteers themselves (Guttentag, 2009). Additionally, this finding speaks to research that suggests how the more personal experiences containing multiple interactions with local community members, the greater impact this has on international volunteers in particular (Brown, 2005; Campbell & Warner, 2015). This is a key finding that will be further discussed within the future recommendations for the SDP movement.

Implications for SDP

Overall, the concept of the volunteer journey was a finding that was not anticipated at the beginning of this research. Understanding these three phases of volunteering can offer some unique insights into the overall volunteer experience. While there are some areas of this experience that are consistent with the literature base, there are other areas that showed as being slightly inconsistent, with scope for further inquiry. What follows next is a discussion aimed at taking the above learnings from the results and discussion chapters of this study and making future recommendations for the SDP movement.

This research sought to contribute to calls in SDP scholarship for greater exploration of SDP programming, leaning on more critically informed, interpretive works from the field (Burnett, 2015). Most importantly however are the actionable implications

that can be taken from such studies and implemented in the field for further study and exploration (Burnett, 2015). While there is a significant value to better understanding the SDP volunteer experience in this context, it is vital to acknowledge how this phenomenon is firmly situated within a bigger discussion around SDP and the application of sport as a vehicle for development. One of the biggest challenges with making recommendations solely around the volunteer phenomenon is that the roots of some issues are embedded within the highly contested assumption that sport is a valuable tool for developmental programming. Based on this understanding I propose three concrete recommendations for SDP organizations as an opportunity to reinvent the movement. However, I preface these recommendations with two major assumptions of SDP and volunteerism that need to be addressed.

The first assumption speaks to the overall purpose of SDP programming. It should be the starting point of all programs to recognize that their end goal should be to become obsolete. In other words, all SDP programs should strive for the achievement of no longer being needed in whichever country or community they are setting out to serve. I fear this is not an understanding that many programs initially begin with. Instead, programs often fail to consider the idea that their support should no longer be necessary should their programming be successful. Instead, many programs start with their goals and ambitions that seem to rely on a continuous environment of underdevelopment in order for the program itself to continue. This is a perspective that needs to change from the very beginning.

Additionally, the very notion of international volunteers as the experts should also be challenged. In keeping with the core roots of Paulo Freire's ideas of critical pedagogy, it is only the oppressed groups that can truly free themselves from their oppressive structures. It is therefore essential for SDP programs and their international volunteers to recognize it is not their role to emancipate the groups they are claiming to serve. These outsiders to the local environment can not simply parachute in as saviors. Instead, they can potentially serve as facilitators in this process given their own expertise and experiences but only with this disposition.

With these core understandings in place, SDP programs need to invest time in developing some type of programmatic structure and outcomes. These outcomes should align with the experiences and expectations of different stakeholders within the organization. These range from the program organizers, to the participants, to the volunteers and to any other support staff. By adopting these outcomes, there can be firmer measures of understanding what the program is supposed to be offering and achieving over time. These outcomes can then be used to further evaluate the experiences of different participants relative to the program's success as a whole. This foundation sets the stage for the following three programmatic recommendations for SDP.

The first recommendation is for SDP organizations to recognize the inherent transformational capacity for SDP volunteers. With some fundamental theoretical and programmatic adaptations, SDP organizations can harness this potential for purposeful transformational and transformative change. The second recommendation builds on this vision and encourages SDP programs to develop a type of application process and

educational programming for their volunteers, especially the international volunteer group. This programming should prepare volunteers for their roles in the field with a strong focus on cultural awareness raising. The third recommendation is for SDP organizations to embrace critical pedagogy as a guide for curriculum development and instruction for SDP programming. Combined, these recommendations along with the aforementioned guiding assumptions could make a serious impact in the way SDP programming is organized, delivered and experienced. The following sections will flesh out these recommendations in more detail.

Opportunity for transformative learning. The data from this research showed that all volunteers referenced different types of transformational behaviors as a result of their participation in the AVOCA project. These behaviors included increased humility and appreciation, changes in perspective on their awareness and understanding of the difficulties people face, while also becoming less materialistic. Fascinatingly, these transformations were not intentionally organized or planned by the organization. These happened organically by sheer involvement in the program.

Before the interaction of the interviews for this study, the volunteer participants were without conscious reflection of their experiences and how these might lead to personal transformation. Instead they appeared unaware of how their experiences volunteering with the AVOCA project had impacted their own lives. These connections seemed to be suspended in their subconscious mind. However, it was their participation in the interviews for this study that allowed the volunteers to purposefully reflect on their experiences.

Imagine then if SDP programs purposefully embraced this element of the volunteer phenomenon. That is, that volunteering carries with it an opportunity for personal transformation. With the added knowledge of the three volunteer phases, organizations could create opportunities to harness these transformations as they naturally occur throughout the volunteer experience. To achieve this, SDP programs could adopt principles of experiential education and create powerful programming designed to facilitate transformational experiences.

For example, volunteers could be asked to participate in both entrance and exit interviews at the beginning and end of their trip. These interviews could encourage volunteers to share their thoughts, feeling and ideas going into the program and then similarly have the opportunity to reflect on their experiences at the end. This could be achieved much like the process in which interviews for this research occurred. This process could draw multiple connections between their initial understandings and expectations in their role as a volunteer and then how they have learned from them. These interviews could also be framed as an opportunity for the program itself in seeking opportunities for feedback each year.

Building on this idea, this interview process could be completed as part of a group comprised of both the international and local volunteers. By way of volunteer consciousness and awareness raising, this could have a positive impact on the criticism of SDP that states how international volunteers often bring dispositions of ignorance and entitlement that is often reflected in hierarchical positioning with such organizations. However, if the volunteers were encouraged to reflect on their experiences in a critically

constructive environment, this could in turn prove to be a humbling experience in which the volunteers acknowledge and appreciate how much they have personally benefitted themselves from their experience.

With the embrace of critical cultural theory, a commitment to this process could ignite a fundamental shift in the way volunteering is perceived in the developmental world. Rather than being perceived as the experts who possess all knowledge, volunteers could be taught to appreciate how they themselves are benefiting significantly from this experience. Furthermore, participants could learn that volunteering is not a simple and one-way transactional process. Instead, volunteering is potentially a more reciprocal endeavor. In other words, the volunteers would appreciate the ways in which their service is actually benefiting them.

This understanding could be heightened when the international volunteers are able to participate in these exercises together with the locally based volunteers. Based on the findings of this research, this could highlight the way in which the volunteer experience has a greater personal impact on the international volunteers rather than the local volunteers. These findings echo calls for developmental projects to abandon the idea of helping or supporting the grassroots, and instead adopt the mindset of learning from knowledge and skills of survival in resisting modernistic forms of pseudo-liberation (Esteva and Prakash's, 2014).

This idea could also present volunteerism as an avenue that moves beyond personal transformational change to transformative understanding and action. Before describing this process further, it is important to distinguish the difference between

transformational change and transformative change. Transformational change is centered on the improvement of personal qualities (Shields, 2010). However, Shields (2010) explains that transformative change links together individual growth by questioning systems of power and privilege central to understandings of justice and democracy (p. 564). This explicitly underlies the combination of critical theory, cultural studies theory and critical pedagogy.

Therefore, if participants were led towards engaging in critical dialogue, they could be guided in connecting their personal transformations with wider systems of inequality and injustice. For example, many of the international volunteers referenced a personal transformation of being less materialistic and appreciative of the possessions they have. While this is an admirable transformation, this could also be taken further in challenging why participants have been socialized into systems that perpetuate materialistic obsession. These types of discussions evoke transformative thought processes in discussing structural systems connected to inequality and injustice.

This first recommendation aims to highlight the seemingly inherent opportunity for personal transformation and transformative action within SDP. The experiences of participants in this study revealed the organic transformations that can occur by way of volunteering. However, these transformations could be enhanced if SDP organizations were aware of this potential and harnessed these opportunities with added programmatic steps encouraging interview type discussion at key intervals in the volunteer journey. Further still, these transformations could extend beyond personal change by connecting

these experiences with wider societal structures, thus serving as the beginnings of a transformative experience.

International volunteer education. While there is a clear opportunity for personal transformation and transformative action in SDP, this study also highlighted cause for concern at possible issues of discrimination and negative impact on communities. One such reason for these behaviors stems from the caliber of participants volunteering in these types of programs. It should not be a surprise that having inexperienced and under-qualified participants brings an increased risk of these types of discriminatory behaviors. Therefore, a clear application process should be in place before volunteers are granted the opportunity to participate in the program. Additionally, one of the first major steps to improving the SDP movement is through the delivery of volunteer education. These programs should specifically target the international volunteers who might be travelling to another country and culture for the first time.

All prospective participants interested in volunteering for an SDP program should be subject to some basic application process. The major rationale for this is the protection of the local participants in the program as well as the volunteers themselves. An application process of this nature also serves as protection for the project itself. These steps follow basic principles of volunteer recruitment including the review of an applicant's resume/CV, previous work experience, volunteer experience, and a cover letter expressing their interests in volunteering for this particular project. All applicants should then participate in a short interview process before being invited as a volunteer in the program.

Upon admittance, volunteers should be required to participate in a project-led educational program. The first function of this program should be to establish clear roles and responsibilities for the volunteers. This is key since the data from this study showed a difference between the roles and responsibilities of the volunteers participating in the Holy Week program. Expectations and standards for volunteer conduct should also be firmly agreed upon before embarking on the trip. Once these fundamentals are made clear then volunteers can be held accountable for their performance during the program.

The educational programming should also be centered on developing the volunteer's cultural understandings of the country and the communities the organization operates. This will build the volunteers' historical understandings of the social, political and economic climate of the country, giving the volunteers a contextual grounding to base their future experiences from. Further still this educational program should serve as an opportunity to challenge volunteers on how their beliefs and ideas about other cultures can either positively or negatively impact the people and communities they purport to serve.

As the data from this study revealed, the international volunteers can have limited knowledge and understanding about a country, it's communities and its people. Any pre-understandings the volunteers possess likely come from unfiltered media sources that can negatively impact their perspectives of the country. These media outlets are subject to heavily biased information that can lead to irrational feelings of nervousness, anxiety and fear. Instead of having volunteers travel with these potentially debilitating inhibitions, SDP organizations should adopt these educational programs to challenge and transform

the source of those emotions. These feelings could be easily mitigated if the volunteers participated in critically informed dialogue that challenged these fears.

For example, the international volunteers referenced the media coverage that was solely focused on the danger and threats caused by the gangs in El Salvador. While the gang-related issues in El Salvador should be acknowledged, mainstream media outlets will often perpetuate fear around this issue without offering any form of historical context or reasoning behind these concerns. This is particularly true in today's climate, where politically motivated propaganda is used to fuel certain ideas and assumptions about immigrants seeking refuge in the United States and Western Europe. Here is one area in which some volunteer education could help participants better understand this national issue. By deconstructing the gang phenomenon and helping the volunteers to understand the historical forces at play and why certain message may be accentuated in mainstream media, this can result in a more rational interpretation of the issue thus minimizing participant fear and anxiety.

This study also highlighted concerns regarding international volunteer behaviors who demonstrated acts of prejudice and discrimination when in the field. Given this finding, SDP organizations can expect that volunteers will likely possess internalized stereotypes and prejudices concerning race, gender and sexuality. This is almost a guaranteed issue to prepare for since human beings are continuously navigating such perspectives. However, if these beliefs and ideas remain unchallenged and even permitted this will likely result in discriminatory behaviors. This is a crucially sensitive area that SDP organizations must be brave enough to address.

For example, the data from this study offered examples of racial, homophobic and gender-based joke telling, both instigated and fueled by some of the international volunteers. It is crucial for these volunteers to be aware that their behaviors are consistently in the spotlight, especially considering the respect and admiration afforded them given their roles. Therefore, if they are engaging in these types of interactions, they are likely going to perpetuate any discriminatory beliefs that some of the local volunteers and community members may have. This is particularly dangerous in the case of gendered jokes that serve to humiliate women. In a society that suffers enormously with gender inequality, represented by gross numbers of sexual assaults against women, gender-based violence and femicide, the international volunteers need to be challenged on how these micro interactions are intimately linked to a larger societal issue. While these connections may not be obvious to the international volunteers, they need to be made aware of how their ideas of "harmless" joke-telling and language perpetuates and legitimizes gender inequality.

It is worth noting this enhanced application and educational process could potentially deter potential volunteers from wanting to participate in the program. This is especially true for smaller developmental organizations who find themselves competing with other such organization for volunteers (Devaney et al., 2015). However, it is my firm belief that this proposal provides an essential step in protecting the participants in such developmental programs. This process provides an opportunity to help international volunteers understand issues of bias and discrimination so that upon arrival to a new country, there is a decreased risk in volunteers bringing with them harmful beliefs,

attitudes and behaviors that could perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices. If performed effectively, this could transform the issue of international volunteers further inflicting social divisions in social majority lands.

Critical pedagogy and SDP. The final recommendation for SDP organizations is to begin building on the tenants of critical pedagogy as the core for developmental curricula. Upon examining the volunteer experience in this study, it became clear that volunteers internalized a strong belief that sport provides a legitimate vehicle for change. Through further adoption of Gramscian theory, the assumptions of sport's transformational capacity has possibly adopted a "common sense" understanding (1971, p. 419). However, as this study has referenced on multiple occasions, this notion is highly contested with limited empirical research that supports the claim that sport serves as a transformational vehicle for social problems. Similar contradictions were evident from the data presented in this study, with volunteers speaking of the positive impact that sport is having on the youth in their communities. Yet, volunteers also acknowledged that many participants are not affected by sport's supposed positive reach.

When asked to expand on how the Holy Week program was offering solutions to the challenges faced by youth in the communities, the volunteers adopted language that mirrored Schulenkorf and Adair's (2014) "magic bullet" critiques of sport. The volunteers used terms such as "distract" and "occupy" to describe the ways in which soccer was supposedly serving their needs. At best, this lends itself to the understanding that soccer is only being used as a mechanism for relief to temporarily divert youth from the challenges of their everyday lives. Ultimately this means the program is not

confronting any of the core issues at play and can be questioned as to its developmental impact.

Instead, participants referenced single-case anecdotes of how the program has benefitted the lives of certain individuals involved in the program. The volunteers stated the goal of "changing one person" to be an acceptable achievement for the program. It is my position however that this idea is rooted in classic neoliberal ideology and has received on-going critiques in the SDP literature (Coalter, 2013; Darnell, 2013). This idea aligns itself with the tenant of individualization as a means of transformational change and a measure of positive impact in SDP.

I believe this idea to be a dangerous one in the field of SDP and wider reaches of international development. First, it should be understood that expectations are far too low if volunteers truly believe that impacting the life of one person is a significant and acceptable return on the project's efforts. However, this idea is far more dangerous. At its core, these beliefs obscure the deep rooted social, political and economic factors at play in the challenges faced by these communities. With this mindset, developmental programming accepts the narrative that by simply changing individual behavior, wider issues can be solved. This belief simply fails to acknowledge the interconnected systems of oppression that form the web of struggle most communities are tied to.

This view further accentuates the position that it is the responsibility of individuals to change their own circumstances through transforming their individual behaviors. This belief can also despair individuals into feeling shame or guilt when they internalize the belief that their struggles are a representation of themselves and their own

deficiencies or lack of effort (Coalter, 2013), when in fact, their struggle is rooted in greater systems of inequality and injustice that are hidden from obvious sight. This type of neoliberal individual rhetoric further obscures these larger societal structures of dominance. Any such developmental programming should be aware of this contradiction and support alternative types of programming to tackle these inequalities at their core if they are purporting a truly developmental perspective.

Overall these findings clearly support the need for SDP programming to adopt a curricular approach rooted in critical pedagogy. This type of pedagogical shift is necessary to address both concerns stated above. First, to challenge the use of sport as a legitimate vehicle for change and second, to shift the focus from individual to community solutions for equitable developmental programming. The role of SDP needs to go far beyond merely overcoming obstacles and instead seek to deconstruct hierarchies of oppression that can often be perpetuated in normative cultures of sport (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2014). As Darnell (2013) summarizes, "Sport can not be 'applied' effectively to development first without understanding why development inequalities exist" (p. 53).

To achieve this, I propose a merge between Paulo Freire's model of critical pedagogy and SDP. This is an idea that has previously been shared in the progressive SDP literature base (Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013). Specifically, I lean upon Spaaij, Oxford and Jeanes (2016) proposition that offers sport as a hook to engage participants in activities rooted in critical pedagogy leading to increased potential for transformative action. Their works are centered on other examples of Freire's critical pedagogy in Kenyan and Cameroonian SDP programs. This proposition also embraces Souto-Manning's (2010)

accounts of Freire's critical pedagogy and the practice of culture circles through the phases of generative themes, problem posing, dialogue, problem solving and action.

Before further identifying some of these steps, it is crucial to recognize the importance of peer-educators in helping to facility critical pedagogy. These educators must possess special qualities that require a deep commitment to Freire's (1970) underlying ideas on dialogue, as the way in which people achieve significance as human beings (p. 88). Freire further states, "Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people" (p. 89). Peer-educators must exhibit humility if they are to truly engage with the people. This humility must be matched with an intense faith in humankind and as Freire demands is an, "a priori requirement for dialogue" (p. 90).

These peer-educators must also allow themselves to be part of the learning process and demonstrate solidarity likened to Freire's interpretation of the "teacher-student" and "student-teacher" (1970, p. 80). It is not the role of the peer-educator to summon the answers to the community members' issues, but to facilitate these learnings through dialogical problem-posing activities. These activities aim to engage Freire's idea of "praxis", that is, "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970).

This form of praxis can be tailored towards collective dialogue, designed to embrace multiple stakeholders in topical discussions around initial "generative themes" (Souto-Manning, 2010). One such example might be the theme of female participation in sport, encouraging participants to discuss their experiences on the subject. Possible issues

within this theme are then problematized and deconstructed by the participants (Souto-Manning, 2010). The goal of such activities is to achieve "conscientization" whereby individuals and groups become critically aware of the forces that contribute to the challenges in their lives, rather than assume their failings are due to individual shortcomings.

Freire's position is that once conscientization develops, so too does the participants' motivations and abilities to engage in strategies to change their circumstances. This is often achieved by way of collective and communal organization that addresses the pre-identified root causes of their struggle. This is centered on the belief that only the people closest to the lived situation are the ones who can name the issues of their world and develop solutions to transform it. Although the steps highlighted above only partially embrace Freire's critical pedagogy, it is possible that an adoption of this type of programming in SDP could lead to transformative action. While it should not be the position of international groups to lead this process they certainly have a place in facilitating this environment and providing resources to contribute to it. This could be an attainable evolution for SDP programs in response to the critiques challenging their credibility as a legitimate vehicle for development.

What I hope these implications imply is a great opportunity for the SDP movement to reinvent itself. By embracing the increasingly growing critiques aimed at these types of programming, SDP is at a critical juncture. It can either continue on the path of remaining blindly committed to the mythopoeic power of sport, or it can

acknowledge its challenges and evolve in a new way of adopting sport as a vehicle for developmental change.

It is still my strong belief that sport can act as a hook to bring people together like few other phenomena. However, this study and other growing evidence strongly suggest this is not enough. Based on the findings of this research it is my position that through understanding the volunteer experience, SDP can indeed serve as a powerful tool for personal transformation and transformative action. However, the sensitivity and great responsibility attached to these roles requires increased standards in volunteer application procedures for suitable participants who require some form of education before engaging in any type of SDP program. Finally, if SDP is to attempt to fulfil it's believed potential it must also adopt new types of curricula that are rooted in critical pedagogy. Only when these steps are embraced will SDP be equipped as a serious contender for transformative developmental action.

Research Limitations

One of the major limitations of this research was the limited amount of time that I had in the field to gather the data and observe the participants. The time to collect data was limited due to the length of AVOCA's Holy Week program. In this time, I had to conduct all ten of the interviews as well as serving as an active participant volunteer in the program itself. I believe this disrupted my ability to transcribe interviews as soon as they were recorded and make notes as well as I could have. This also impacted the time I had to seek opportunities to follow up with participants after their initial interview. Given that all interview participants then travelled back to their home nations, or remained in El

Salvador after the study, it was difficult to then reconnect with the participants after their initial interview. While this may have impacted the data collection procedures, my extensive experiences in the country and relationships with the communities meant a minimal acclimatization period which is often a challenge for most participant researchers in the field.

While there are advantages to being completely immersed in the program itself, I experienced some challenges in being able to distinguish between my role as a participant and as a researcher. The roles are not black and white and sometimes I found it difficult finding the balance between both. Given the packed schedule of the Holy Week program, I had to isolate myself from the remainder of the group in order to record field notes and reflections of my observations each day or to start transcribing interviews. At times this required great discipline in needing to politely decline certain activities with the remainder of the volunteers and the communities. It was also a physically and emotionally exhausting experience that I did not anticipate before embarking on the trip.

The insights yielded from this study have come from a combination of a white, Western male as participant-researcher, as well as a research participant group that also only consisted of males. Undoubtedly, the perspectives drawn from this study will have been different should there have been female participation in the study. I was limited in the number of volunteers that had the necessary three years of volunteer experience in the AVOCA project whom I could interview as part of this study's criteria. Consequently, it is a limitation of this study that it cannot reflect the experiences of all volunteers given the singular gendered make-up of the group.

Another such limitation of this research concerns my own limits of expertise in some subject areas in this study. For example, my doctoral coursework has indeed prepared me for general research methodology and educational theories and concepts. However, there are some areas where my analysis of this research has relied heavily upon literature in conducting phenomenological inquiries, as well as broad topics of international development and volunteerism. I was dedicated in reading the relative literature extensively to conduct a study of this nature but still feel that enhanced education in these areas might have further added to the quality of the research findings.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the results of this study, I propose four ideas for future research recommendations. The first idea is to propose a longitudinal study of an SDP program intertwined with a curriculum in critical pedagogy. The second idea is to learn even more the SDP volunteerism phenomenon by understanding the experiences of volunteers who chose not to continue their participation. The third idea would be another longitudinal study that examines the volunteers perceived transformations in their own countries. The final idea is to learn more about the SDP model merged with critical theory and how this has an impact on the lives of the youth participants themselves. These recommendations are broadly aligned with calls from a host of scholars in SDP that plea for more sociologically rigorous and longitudinal works, employing interpretive frameworks guided by critical perspectives (Burnett, 2015).

The first recommendation for future research builds from the final implication detailed for SDP. This would be a proposal for a longitudinal study conducted around an

SDP program modelled on critical pedagogy. This type of study could detail the framework of a curriculum grounded in critical pedagogy, monitor its application in the field and then report on the results of this program. This could similarly happen through a participant-researcher who observes the interactions between the program participants during the program itself, including interviews of how they experienced the program. Then the program could be measured by the impacts it had on the major issues in the participants lives outside of the program and in their communities.

The second recommendation for future research would be to continue exploring other volunteer stakeholders in SDP. However, focus should not only be given to volunteers that continue their participation in a project but to participants that stopped volunteering. It would be fascinating to gain a better understanding of why people initially chose to serve as a volunteer but then ultimately ceased serving in their role. For example, it could be that the hegemonic discourse evidenced in this study has a further negative impact on the retention rates of volunteers.

It was determined in this study that volunteers experienced three phases of the volunteer journey with the final phase resulting in a commitment to the project. However, there have been participants with the AVOCA project who also experienced the initial investment phase then the connection phase but did not return through the commitment phase. I propose it would offer a useful insight into better understanding the volunteer phenomenon if the reasons why participants stopped their involvement were better understood. These insights could help to minimize the risk of negative volunteer experiences in developmental programming and increase volunteer retention.

The third idea for future research would be a longitudinal study that examines the perceived transformations of international volunteers in their own countries. While the international volunteers in this study reported multiple ways in which being a volunteer positively transformed their own lives, there is little evidence to support these claims. It would there be fascinating to better understanding how exactly these transformations might have manifested in the lives of the international volunteers upon returning to their homes.

The final idea for future research is to learn from the perspectives of the youth participants themselves. Up until now, little research has been conducted on actual youth participants in SDP programs. One of the reasons for this may be the difficulties in gaining access to minors for research studies. However, if SDP is to truly learn from all stakeholders in the organization, it is vital to learn from the experiences of young people as to how they can be better served.

One way to do this could be through a similar study to this one. Youth participants could be interviewed about their own subjective experiences of participating in a SDP program, drawing connections to how their involvement may have had an impact on their lives when returning to their communities. The youth in this study might highlight key areas in which SDP can improve and could lead to major recommendations in how SDP actually serves to make an impact in positively changing some of the issues plaguing the lives of these young people.

Final Thoughts

When I first conceived of this research study a couple of years ago, I was so excited at the prospect of what I might find. Deep down I had my own ideas about what this type of study might reveal, and I had my own experiences as a volunteer to fuel these thoughts. However, I have been surprised at how much I have learned about myself throughout this process. While the critical nature of this study has tried to highlight areas for consideration and improvement, I could relate to many of the volunteers in their experiences, motivations and impacts that were shared in this research.

There was one incident in particular during my time in the field that sparked some critical reflection on my position as a researcher and my role as a volunteer for the AVOCA project. One day during the camps, I noticed that one of the local Salvadorian coaches seemed disappointed that my participation was limited in the coaching activities during the program. This was because I spent the majority of my time trying to conduct interviews and I was often isolated from the main activities. While he said he appreciated I was doing my "school work" before he embraced me and thanked me for my efforts, he commented that next year he wanted to see more of me coaching in the field.

There may not appear to be anything ground-breaking about this minor interaction. However, reflecting on this moment left a considerable mark on me. I began to realize that I am personally benefiting from the access granted to me by the AVOCA project in collecting data for my dissertation. I have been enjoying my own position of privilege in basing my Ph. D. accolade off the back of this program that has only one week in the year to which the people of these communities greatly look forward. This

thought left a bittersweet taste in my mouth. I felt an increased responsibility in making sure that my research ends up being applied and impactful in helping to generate new types of SDP programming that can truly benefit people.

It is my ambition to use this initial study as the foundational step upon which I embark in future action-based research in SDP. My goals include attaining a career in academia at an institution that places a value on international development and sport and development. My dream is to be part of an institution that is a leader in SDP, especially with a critical perspective for human enhancement and emancipation. With a move towards offering transformative experiences in a new direction for sport and development, there is a lifetime of research potential in this space. I am excited at the prospect of taking my first major step on that journey.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Questions on Experiences

- To start, could you please tell me your name, a little about yourself, and how you became involved with the AVOCA project?
- Please tell me about your role with AVOCA. What do you do now for the project and how has your role evolved over time?
    - What knowledge base/skill set do you feel you bring?
    - Can you share any examples of when you have applied this?
    - How else have you contributed to the project?
- Tell me some of the things that you do in preparation for the project before the Holy Week?
    - What do you do after the Holy Week?
- Can you describe, in as much detail as possible, the first time you were asked to participate in the AVOCA project?
    - How did this opportunity come about for you?
    - Who made this invitation?
- Can you recall your first ever volunteer experience with the AVOCA project?
    - What did you do?
    - Was there anything unique you remember about this first time?
- How is your first experience as a volunteer different to your last experience?
    - Did you do anything differently?

- How would you describe the mood and emotions you feel when volunteering for the AVOCA project?
- Can you try to summarize what is it like to be a volunteer for the AVOCA project?

Questions on Motivations

- Why have you chosen to volunteer your time for the AVOCA project?
    - How would you define of a "Volunteer"?
- What are some of the reasons for your continued participation in the AVOCA project?
    - Have these reasons changed at all over time?
- Has there ever been a time when you did not volunteer for the project?
    - If so, why?
- Why do you think other participants also choose to volunteer their time for the AVOCA project?
- If you were to recommend other people to participate as a volunteer, what would you tell them?

Questions on Impact

- How would you define the term "Development"?
- How would you describe the purpose and the impact of the work that AVOCA does?
- How do you think AVOCA helps others?
    - How do you think your role as a volunteer fits into this?

- How do you feel your experiences as a volunteer with AVOCA have had an impact on your own life?
    - Any specific areas? For example, family, relationships, or work?
- Do you think these impacts are the same for all volunteers in the project?
    - If so, why?

If not, what might be different?

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