# Talking About Taekwon-Do

'An ethnographic study exploring children's experiences of participating in International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF) Taekwon-Do, in a North of England Taekwon-Do school'

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### Background

Conclusive evidence regarding the effects of martial arts within research literature remains scarce. In addition, little is known about how children experience participation, and involvement in martial arts (Theeboom, De Knop & Vertonghen, 2009).

This study aims to address the evident gap in literature and research, that explores children's participation and involvement in Taekwon-Do. This area has been identified through pre-empirical reading, thus the intention is to make an original contribution to the knowledge base.

### Aims/Objectives

- To explore the potential health and wellbeing impacts for children participating in International Taekwon-Do Federation
   Taekwon-Do
- •Explore the practices that underpin child participation in International Taekwon-Do Federation Taekwon-Do.
- •Explore how the children engage with cultural aspects of International Taekwon-Do Federation Taekwon-Do.
- To contribute to the body of literature around children's participation in sport, health and wellbeing.

### Methodology

- •This is an ethnographic study based on 'naturalistic inquiry' which will allow me to enhance and deepen my understanding of how children are involved in Taekwon-Do classes (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995).
- •The study will take place over 15-18 months tracking the children's progress through belt rankings.
- •The methodological approach complements my already established role within my Taekwon-Do School as an associate 2nd Degree Black Belt instructor in the children's classes, thus reinforcing the validity of my study (Silverman, 2016).

### Data Collection/Analysis

- I have chosen use 'participant observation' as the primary method of data collection. The observations I record will be in a written 'field note' format, including:
- 1)Diagrammatic representations of classes.
- 2)Behavioural interactions.
- 3)Interactions between the children (different belt rankings).
- 4)Conversations with parents/instructors (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).
- 5) Interactions between instructors and children.
- •Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interpretation of data will be an ongoing feature of the study as data is collected (Braun&Clarke, 2006).
- 6) Document analysis and Reflexive journal.



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### **Theory**

Lev Vygotsky (1978,b), socio-cultural theory is central to my research it will allow me to explore how the children participate and navigate the culture and customs of the Taekwon-Do school. It will also help me to understand the children's shift in identity as they move through the different belt rank/gradings and become more proficient at Taekwon-Do.

In addition, I am exploring the perspectives of Brofenbrenner, Ecological systems theory (1992) and Lave & Wenger Community of Practice (1991) to understand how the Korean culture and community inherent in the practice of Taekwon-Do have an influence on children's identities.

Taekwondo Belt Rankings from White to Black
The achievement of each belt represents the children's increasing commitment, skill, proficiency and knowledge of Taekwondo.

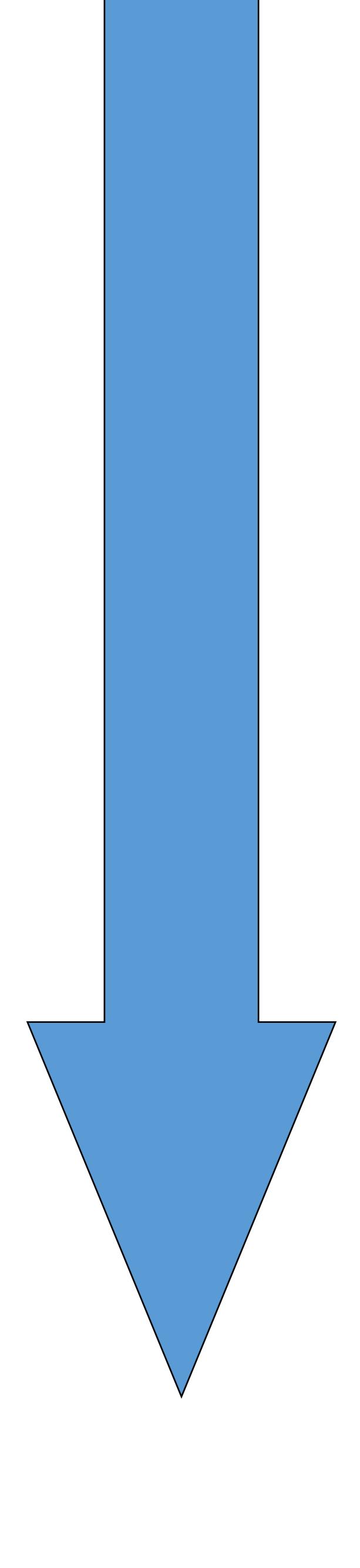
## Shifting Identity

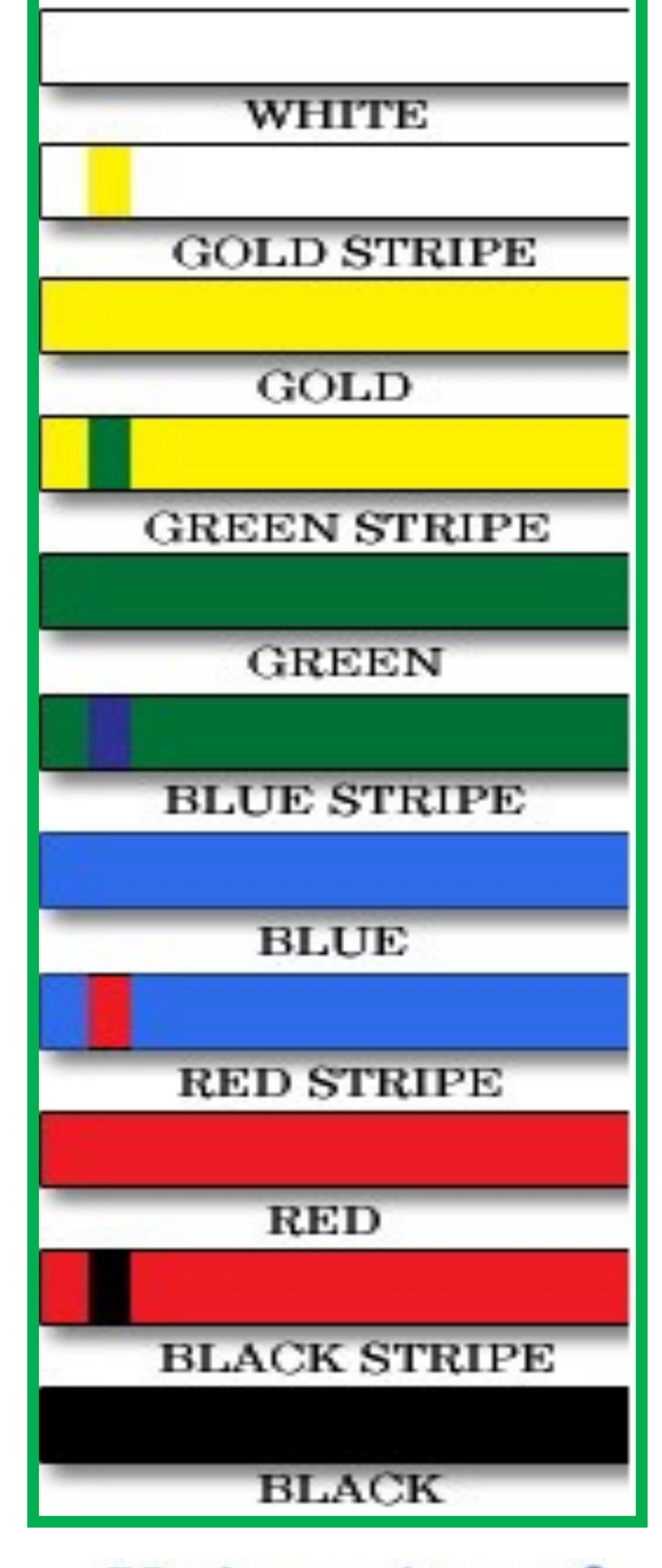
The blue arrow represents the shifting identity of the children as they move through the belt rankings at Taekwon-Do

The concept of 'shifting identity' is central to my study. I will explore how the children are involved and develop at Taekwon-Do over 15-18 month period.

The Taekwon-Do belt rankings provide me with a time frame for data collection, belts are tested as follows:

White-to Blue belt- Grading's scheduled every 3 months
 Blue to Black belt- Grading's scheduled every 6 months





Taekwon-Do Meaning: 'Tae-Foot Kwon-Fist Do-Way'

