

COMPARISON OF SPORT MANAGEMENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESEARCH IN SCANDINAVIA

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All authors:

Berit Skirstad, Hallgeir Gammelsater, PG Fahlström, Ulrik Wagner

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Synopsis:

The development of sport management in Scandinavia is described and compared through three case studies. The theory of translation which is a new-institutionalism approach focuses upon institutional change within organizations, and Campbell (2004, p.28) identifies two underlying mechanisms for institutional change, 'bricolage' and 'transition'. The findings reveal translation from international sport management education programs and research on the one hand by adopting a mimetic approach however bricolaging is used for creating new studies in combinations with what already exists for instance sociology of sport or physical education programs. The transformation from amateur to professional sport is special for Scandinavian countries, and is looked upon as fore-runners for the establishment of studies in sport management. Despite increased professionalization and commercialization, the co-existing system with volunteers may have slowed down development of sports management as an academic field in Scandinavia.

Abstract:

AIM: The Scandinavian countries Denmark, Norway and Sweden share a legacy of a common sport tradition called the Scandinavian Sport Model (Anderson & Carlsson, 2009; Peterson, 2008), where two thirds of the sport clubs are run by volunteers (Ibsen & Seippel, 2010; Hellman, 2014). Despite Scandinavian similarities and common legacy from a social democratic welfare state, differences occur in how sport historically is organized on federal level (Ibsen, 2002), how international anti-doping policy is implemented (Wagner & Hanstad, 2011) and how elite sports are run (Andersen & Rognlan, 2012; Gammelsæter, Storm & Söderman, 2009). The Norwegian model is the most centralized one and lacks parliament control (Bergsgard, 2002). This back-drop information is important for understanding how sport management education programs have developed in Scandinavia, and so far no studies are published about it. Therefore we want to fill that gap. The aim of this paper is to answer

the questions: How and why has the sport management as education and research discipline developed differently in the Scandinavian countries?
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: Early neo-institutional contributions emphasize how organizations within an organizational field increasingly resemble each other in behavior and structure due to pressure (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1991). We can argue that sport management as a field has gradually been institutionalized on a global scale. However, the idea of institutional isomorphism can also be challenged by emphasizing organizational agency once we try to explain the heterogeneous development in Scandinavia: The theory of translation which is a new-institutionalism approach focuses upon institutional change within organizations, and Campbell (2004, p.28) identifies two underlying mechanisms for institutional change, 'bricolage' and 'transition'. By bricolage is meant the recombination of existing institutional elements within a field or an organization. The concept of translation is used to highlight the dynamic travel and transformation of ideas. International trends will affect this development through transition. It is adding to our knowledge about how 'global' ideas become 'local' (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005). This framework enables us to outline how an international emerging field such a sport management interacts with and has impact upon a local cultural context and tradition.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN: Three comparative case studies show how the sport management education programs and research have developed. Knowledge derived from: 1) four researchers' personal experience as entrepreneurs of such studies and research programs, 2) brief informal interviews/contacts other entrepreneurs of such programs and 3) archive studies. Altogether 13 interviews were made (6 in Norway, 3 in Denmark and 4 in Sweden). The sample technique of snowballing was used until saturation was reached about sport management studies in Scandinavia. The four authors conducted the analysis first separately and then collectively in order to increase the credibility because of representing different countries.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS: The transformation from amateur to professional sport is special for Scandinavian countries, and is looked upon as fore-runners for the establishment of studies in sport management. As Peterson (2008) points out, the market is not the only actor paying for sport in Scandinavia, because this transformation has mainly taken place by public support and funding. Focus is on time-lines for the first sport management programs, the profile of the different institutions as well as the research generated from these milieus and their international involvement are compared. Scandinavian sport traditions are rooted in popular and voluntary movements, and it is obvious that unless salaried jobs emerged in the sport sector there would be no demand for higher education in sport management. One antecedent was lifting of the amateur rules which defined Scandinavian sport until the late 1960s (Peterson, 2008). The findings reveal translation from international sport management education programs and research on the one hand by adopting a mimetic approach however bricolaging is used for creating new studies in combinations with what already exists for instance sociology of sport or physical education programs. Norway is the first country to adopt sport management in the 1980s, while the discipline emerges as late as the last part of the 2000s in Denmark. None of the main business schools in Scandinavia have taken up sport management as part of their portfolio contrary to trends in other parts of the world. Despite increased professionalization and

commercialization, the co-existing system with volunteers may have slowed down development of sports management as an academic field in Scandinavia. Future studies should highlight how the translation works today so providers of sport management can make use of how ideas transform.

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